

FRONTISPIECE.



*A GENERAL VIEW of Some of the most Important EVENTS in the
 LIFE & DEATH of OUR Blessed SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST, VIZ.
 His Nativity, Ministry, Last Supper, Crucifixion, Burial, Resurrection,
 & Ascension into Heaven.*

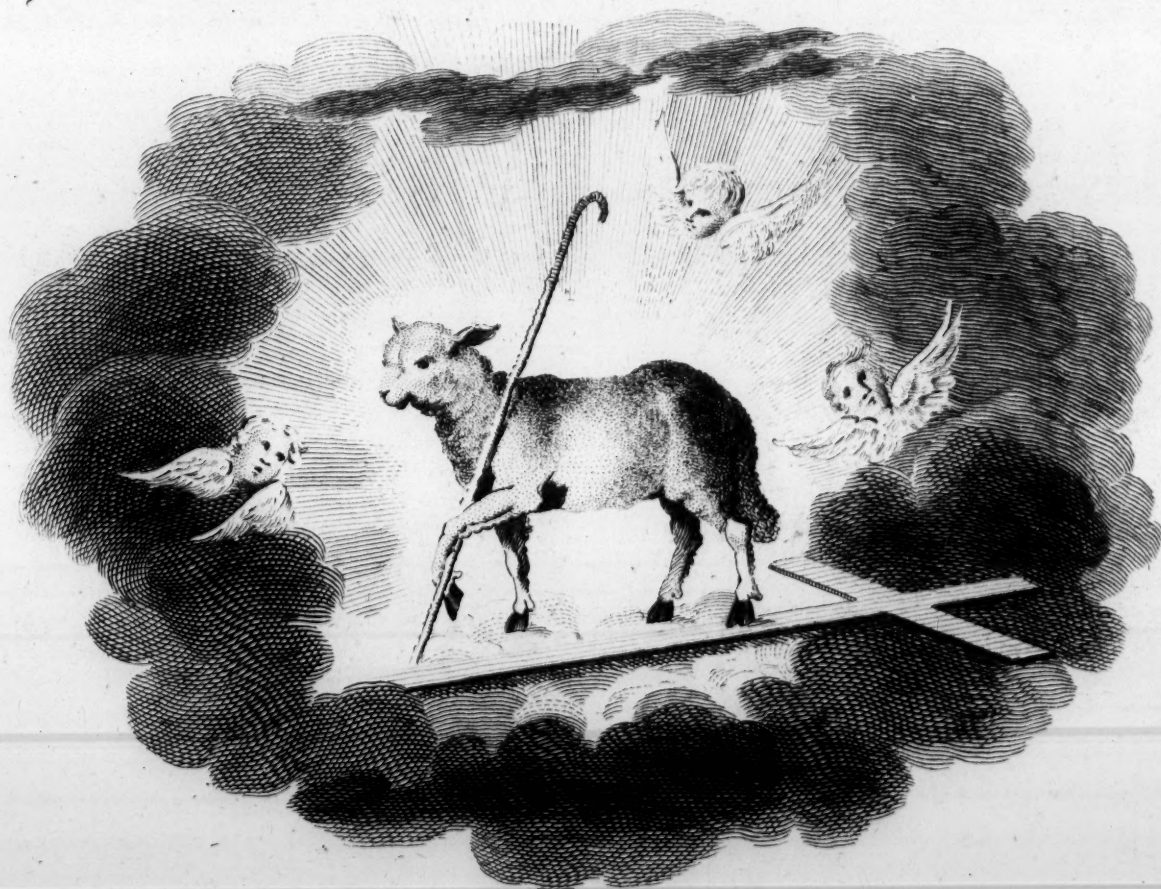
The **NEW and COMPLETE**
History of the
L I F E
Of Our Blefsed Lord and Saviour,
J E S U S & C H R I S T,

To which will be added,
The Lives, Sufferings and Transactions of his Holy
A P O S T L E S, E V A N G E L I S T S, D I S C I P L E S, &c. &c.
The Whole Accompanied with Practical Improvements and Useful Remarks,

By the **REV^d THO^s. DAWSON, L.L.D.**

Late of Emanuel College Cambridge.

Adorned with a Set of Elegant Engravings.



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THE NEW AND COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE L I F E O F OUR BLESSED LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

Containing a Full, Accurate, Complete, and Universal Account of Our *Glorious Redeemer*; from his taking upon himself Human Nature, to his Crucifixion, Resurrection from the Dead, and glorious Ascension into Heaven.

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Nativity,	Baptism,	Doctrine,	Parables,	Institution of the	Resurrection,
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Preservation,	Temptation,	Apostles,	Transfiguration,	Crucifixion,	Ascension, &c.
Circumcision,	Ministry,	Miracles,	Passion,	Burial,	&c. &c.

TO WHICH WILL BE ADDED

The LIVES, TRANSACTIONS, and SUFFERINGS of His Holy APOSTLES, EVANGELISTS, DISCIPLES, and other primitive MARTYRS,

Who have laid down their LIVES in the GLORIOUS CAUSE of JESUS CHRIST, particularly

St. Matthew,	St. John,	St. Andrew,	St. Bartholomew,	St. Simon,	St. Barnabas,
St. Mark,	St. Peter,	St. James the Great,	St. James the Less,	St. Jude,	St. Stephen,
St. Luke,	St. Paul,	St. Philip,	St. Thomas,	St. Matthias,	Virgin Mary, &c.

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Including the LIFE and TRANSACTIONS of JOHN the BAPTIST, the Harbinger or Forerunner of the Great MESSIAH, &c. &c.

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TO WHICH WILL ALSO BE SUBJOINED,

A FULL DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

Against all the OBJECTIONS of JEWS, ATHEISTS, DEISTS, INFIDELS, and FREE-THINKERS, of the present Age, Who have endeavoured to place MANKIND on a Level with the BEASTS that perish.

Interpersed with a very great Variety of Curious Particulars on the Subject, barely alluded to in Scripture, but explained at large by cotemporary Authors, who wrote on the same Transactions, and corroborated the great Truths of CHRISTIANITY, upon which our eternal Happiness depends.

By the Rev. THOMAS DAWSON, LL.D.

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THE NEW AND COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE

J. J. H. H.

OUR BLESSED GOD
JESUS CHRIST



T H E
P R E F A C E.

AT this time when every species of infidelity prevails among us, a Work of this kind is offered to the Public with peculiar propriety; and whether we consider the great Importance of the Subject itself, or the Masterly and Elegant manner in which it is executed, this Work will be found highly worthy the perusal of serious Christians of all denominations.

The greatest object which should principally engage the attention of mankind is, the pursuit of that divine knowledge, which tends to promote their welfare while in this life, and their eternal happiness in that which is to come. No measures whatever can be taken more materially to effect this, than an earnest endeavour by men, to make themselves acquainted with the exemplary Life of Our Blessed Redeemer, the Great Captain of our sufferings, the Preserver of our Souls from Death to Life everlasting, the grand Pattern of sanctity, humility, meekness, and charity, the Great King of Glory, the guiding Star to righteousness, and who, as himself expresses it, is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. As, therefore, in Him only rests the whole of our eternal Salvation, let Him engross our most serious attention; and let the examples of his Holy Apostles, Evangelists, Disciples, &c. who have sealed their Faith with their Blood, inspire us with resolution, and make us emulous to be accounted voluntary servants of our Saviour Christ, who condescended to suffer an ignominious and painful death, to clear us from our sins, and the punishment due to our manifold offences.

In seriously perusing the Life, Transactions, and Death of the Great Redeemer of Mankind, we shall there find those balmy sweets, those solid comforts, which will promote our felicity here, and secure to us eternal happiness hereafter. If we endeavour to pursue the divine system laid down by Our Blessed Saviour, there is no reason to doubt but our obedience will be crowned with that reward, which he has been pleased to promise to all those who wish to imitate his glorious example. Our Blessed Lord himself tells us, that if we are poor in spirit, we shall gain the kingdom of Heaven; if we mourn here, we shall be comforted; if we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we shall be filled. It is from these assurances that a great author says, "the happiness of this life consists in the Holy Gospel, without which we cannot come to the knowledge of the true God." All true knowledge, virtue, and perfection, which a Christian can desire, or attain to, are contained in the Doctrines and Transactions of Our Glorious Redeemer; who teaches us, that righteousness and holiness consist in the inward purity and integrity of the mind, not in the outward shew of works; in a conscience void of offence, not in the pompous applause of men; in humility, not in ostentation; in contempt, not in pursuit of worldly honours: and he further teaches us to love our enemies as well as our friends. Here we read of the nature of true faith; of trusting in Christ alone; and how we ought not to glory, but in Him. Here we read also of the certainty of salvation, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and of life everlasting.

Though this valuable Work will be comprized in only Twenty-four Weekly Numbers, yet it will contain not only the most ample account of the Life and Transactions of Our Blessed Redeemer, together with those of his Holy Apostles and Disciples, but likewise many interesting circumstances materially connected with the Evangelic Writings, not to be found in any other Work of this kind.

The Author most sincerely hopes that the perusal of this Work will produce that effect for which it is so happily adapted, namely, the promotion of the cause of Christianity, and making
B. mankind

mankind wise unto eternal salvation. A serious attention to the Divine transactions contained in this Sacred History, will fill the mind with awful, though pleasing ideas; banish every doubt; confirm Readers in the most sublime truths; and fill their souls with divine extasies. In the execution of this performance, the Author has endeavoured to improve the understanding, and warm the heart; to inspire the mind with gratitude for the astonishing Love of a dying Saviour, and to excite the soul to embrace his kind invitations of forgiveness, of happiness, and of peace.

T. DAWSON.

N. B. It is necessary here to observe, that the external Execution of this Work will be in the most respectable stile, the *Paper* and *Print* will be good, and the *Copper-plates*, including the most important Events in the *Life of Jesus Christ*, will be engraved in a superior stile. The Numbers will also contain a much greater Quantity of Matter in Letter-Press, the Pages being considerably wider and longer than any other Work of the Kind and Price. And the whole will be comprized in Twenty-four Numbers only, being the most perfect and the cheapest Work of the kind ever published.

ADVANTAGES PECULIAR TO THIS WORK.

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III. *This Work will be accurately Printed on a Large and beautiful New Letter, cast on purpose to suit Readers of every denomination.*

IV. *Every Number of this Work will contain at least Twenty large Quarto pages of Letter-Press, and some of them Twenty-four pages or more, which have never been given before in any similar publication whatever.*

V. *Forty most beautiful Engravings, representing the most important transactions in the Life of our Blessed Saviour, &c. will be delivered gratis in the course of this most valuable Work.*

VI. *Portraits of the Evangelists, Apostles, &c. of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will be included among the Embellishments of this Work.*

VII. *Finally, it is to be observed, the Paper of this Work will be superfine Wove Demy, far superior to any that has ever appeared in any Work of the kind.*

* * The Proprietors think it necessary to observe, that they have printed this Work in a Quarto Size, for the following Reasons:

1. Being a Book so frequently read by Christian Families, it is infinitely more convenient in Quarto.

2. It has the Advantage of containing a greater Number of Pages, and a larger Quantity of Letter-Press, than could have been contained in a common Size Folio.

3. By Printing it in Quarto, the Author is enabled to bring the Whole within the compass of Twenty-four Numbers.

It therefore may be purchased by the Poor as well as the Rich: and, as a farther Accommodation, the Numbers will be published Weekly, Price only 6d each.

As the First Number, being a Specimen of this Work, may be perused Gratis, the Author requests the Readers to RECOMMEND this Work to their *Relations, Friends, and Acquaintance*, as it may be of the greatest public benefit, by causing the Work to be as generally read and useful as possible.

THE

THE NEW AND COMPLETE HISTORY
OF THE
LIFE, DOCTRINE, and MIRACLES,
THE DEATH, RESURRECTION, and ASCENSION
OF OUR
BLESSED LORD GOD AND SAVIOUR
J E S U S C H R I S T:

TO WHICH WILL BE ADDED,
The LIVES, ACTS, and SUFFERINGS,
OF HIS
Holy APOSTLES, EVANGELISTS, and DISCIPLES,
INCLUDING
The LIFE of his GREAT HARBINGER OF FORERUNNER St. JOHN THE BAPTIST, &c. &c. &c.

C H A P T E R I.

CONTAINING THE INTRODUCTION, viz.

THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST FORETOLD. PREDICTION CONCERNING THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.
SALUTATION OF THE ANGEL TO THE VIRGIN MARY. VISIT OF ELIZABETH TO HER COUSIN MARY.
BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.

THE time was now approaching, when the great Creator of the world was about to fulfil those promises, which he had made by his holy prophets from the beginning; but he first sends his harbinger or forerunner to prepare the way before the Saviour of the world, who was now in the following extraordinary manner to make his public entry into it.

And in order to render the accomplishment of these prophecies more wonderful, and becoming the hand of an almighty power, the conception and birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, was introduced with a stupendous miracle: God hereby not only denoting his omnipotence, which is not always circumscribed within the scanty bounds of nature; but at the same time exciting the minds of men to an expectance of something extraordinary from such preternatural means.

In the reign of Herod, king of Judea, lived a certain priest named Zacharias, and his wife Elizabeth; both of the tribe of Levi, but by a peculiar descent; he being of the lot of * Abiah, which was the eighth according to the division of David, and she lineally descended

* Some of the fathers were of opinion, that this Zacharias was, at this time, high-priest, upon a false supposition that the offering of incense was reserved to the high-priest only: but, besides the testimony of Josephus, who tells us expressly, that Simon, the son of Boethus, was high-priest this year; it appears from St. Luke himself, that Zacharias was no more than an ordinary priest, of the family or course of Abiah, which of the four and twenty courses, appointed by David for the service of the temple, when it should be built, was the eighth, 2 Chron. xxvi. 10. For, though it was the high-priest's prerogative, on the great day of expiation, to enter into the holy of holies, and there burn incense, which no ordinary priest might do, Levit. vi. 12. yet, in the common service of the day,

descended from the daughters of Aaron. Nor was their character inferior to the excellency of their extraction, being just before God, and unblameable in their conversation. Yet hitherto God had blessed them with no issue, and being both far advanced in years, they had now no reason to hope for, or expect any; but God, who often acts contrary to all the seeming improbabilities of nature, had determined to make them instruments of his glory.

When Zacharias was to officiate in his course, and to burn incense in the temple, the angel Gabriel appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar. The unusualness of the sight struck the priest with surprize and fear; which the angel soon dispelled, by assuring him of the favour he and his wife had found with God; who, notwithstanding their great age and her sterility, intended to bless them with a son, whose birth should be the occasion of great joy not only to them but many others; foretelling at the same time the dignity of his office: that being from his birth inspired with the Holy Ghost, he should go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the children of Israel, and make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

When our concerns appear desperate, then God begins a change: the state of the Jewish church was extremely corrupted, immediately before the news of the gospel; yet, bad as it was, not only the priesthood, but the courses of attendance continued, even from David's time till Christ's: it is a desperately depraved condition of a church, where no good orders are left. Never times were so barren, as not to yield some good: the greatest dearth affords some few good ears to the gleaners: Christ would not have come into the world, but he would have some faithful to entertain him: He who had the disposing of all times and men, would cast some holy ones into his own times. Zacharias and Elizabeth are just, both of Aaron's blood, and John Baptist of theirs: Elizabeth was just, as well as Zacharias, that the forerunner of a Saviour might be holy on both sides: if the stock and the graft be not both good, there is much danger of the fruit: it is an happy match, when the husband and the wife are one, not only in themselves, but in God.

It fell out well, that Zacharias was chosen by lot to this ministration, that God's immediate hand might be seen in all the passages that concerned his great prophet, that as the person, so the occasion might be of God's own choosing: in lots and their seeming casual disposition, God can give a reason, though we can give none: morning and evening, twice a day, their law called them to offer incense to God, that both parts of the day might be consecrated to the Maker of time: the outer temple was the figure of the whole church upon earth, like as the holy of holies represented heaven.

When could it be more fit for the angel to appear to Zacharias, than when prayers and incense were offered by him? Where could he more fitly appear, than in the temple? In what part of the temple more fitly, than at the altar of incense? and whereabouts rather, than on the right side of the altar? Those glorious spirits, as they are always with us, so most in our devotions; and as in all places, so most of all in God's house: they rejoice to be with us, whilst we are with God; as on the contrary they turn their faces from us, when we give way to sin and folly.

He that had been accustomed to live, and serve in the presence of the Master, was now astonished at the presence of the servant; so much difference there is betwixt our faith and our senses, that the apprehension of the presence of the God of spirits by faith

day, each priest, whose lot it was, went every morning and evening into the Sanctum, or body of the temple, and there burnt the daily incense upon the altar, which was placed before the veil of the most holy place, Exod. xxx. 6, &c. For these and several reasons, which Annotators have produced, it seems plain, that Zacharias could not possibly be high-priest at this time; and, whatever credit may be given to the tradition,—that, by the order of Herod the Great, he was put to death, between the porch and the altar, viz. in the inclosure that surrounded the altar of burnt offerings; and that, when every one was ignorant of his murder, a certain priest thinking that he stayed too long, entered into the temple, and found him dead, and his blood congealed upon the ground, and at the same time hearing a voice, that it should never be wiped out, until his revenger came; whatever credit, I say, may be given to this tradition, it was doubtless upon this foundation that many of the ancients thought that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was that Zachariah, son of Barachiah, mentioned by our Saviour in the Gospel, whose blood was shed between the temple and the altar.

goes down sweetly with us; whereas the sensible apprehension of an angel dismays us: holy Zacharias, who used to live by faith, thought he should die, when his sense began to be exercised. It was the weakness of him, who served at the altar without horror to be daunted with the face of his fellow servant: in vain we look for such ministers of God as are without infirmities, when just Zacharias was troubled in his devotions with that wherewith he should have been comforted: it was partly the suddenness, and partly the glory of the apparition, that affrighted him: the good angel was both apprehensive of and compassionate towards Zacharias's weakness, and presently encourages him with a cheerful excitation, "Fear not, Zacharias." The blessed spirits, though they do not often vocally express it, do pity our human frailties, and secretly suggest comfort to us, when we perceive it not.

There was not more fear in the face, than comfort in the speech; "Thy prayer is heard:" no angel could have told him better news; our desires are uttered in our prayers: what can we wish, but to have what we would? Many good fruits had Zacharias made, and amongst the rest for a son: doubtless it was now some years since he made that request: for he was now stricken in age, and had ceased to hope; yet had God laid it up all the while; and when he thinks not of it, brings it forth to effect: thus doth the mercy of our God deal with his patient and faithful suppliants: in the fervor of their expectation he many times holds them off; and when they least think of it, and have forgotten their own suits, he graciously condescends to answer them. Delay should not discourage our faith; it may be God hath long granted, ere we shall know of his grant. Many a father repents of his fruitfulness, and hath such sons that he wishes unborn: but to have so gracious and happy a son as the angel foretold, could not be less comfort than honour to the age of Zacharias.

The old priest indeed was as much astonished at the subject of the mission, as he was at the appearance of the messenger; and esteeming it impossible that his wife, thus advanced in years, should conceive a son, weakly demanded a sign* to confirm his belief, in the fulfilment of the promise, though he knew the authority of the angel was derived from the God of Truth. But as it is the lot of humanity to err, Zacharias had, for that time, forgotten that nothing was impossible to Omnipotence, as well as that it was not the first time that the aged were caused to conceive, and bear a child. The least reflection would have reminded him, that Sarah conceived, and bare Isaac, when she was far advanced in years; and that Samuel was born of a woman who had been long reputed barren, and even called so.

The curiosity of Zacharias was indeed gratified, but in a manner that carried with it at once a confirmation of the promise, and a punishment of his unbelief. As he had verbally testified his doubt of the fulfilment of the prediction of the angel, he was punished with the loss of his speech, which was to continue to the very day in which the prediction should be accomplished; "Behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that those things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season." He soon afterwards received an awful

* The words of Zacharias to the angel are, "Whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years," Luke i. 18. much of the same import with those of Abraham upon a like occasion, "Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit the land of Canaan?" Gen. xviii. 8. How then came it to pass, that Abraham was gratified with a sign in the same request, for which Zacharias was punished with dumbness? Now, though there may be a great similitude in the words, which are spoken by several persons, yet there may, at the same time, be a very considerable difference in the heart and habit of mind, from whence they proceed, which we must all allow; God can see much better, than we can perceive by words. In relation to Abraham, then, the holy spirit bears him testimony, that "he staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able to perform," Rom. iv. 19. and therefore if he asked a sign, it was not to beget, but to nourish and confirm this faith in him. But in Zacharias, the asking of a sign favoured of perfect infidelity, in that he believed not an angel, appearing to him in the name of the Lord, and in a place, where evil angels durst not come: an angel, telling him his prayer was heard, which evil angels could not know; and acquainting him with things, which tended to the glory of God, the completion of his promises, and the welfare of mankind, which evil angels would not do. His punishment therefore was the just result of his unbelief; but (what shews the mercy of God in inflicting it) it was a punishment of such a nature, as carried with it an answer to his desire, being no more than a privation of speech, until the words of the angel were fulfilled.

testimony of the divinity of the mission of Gabriel, who was no sooner departed, than he was struck dumb: for when he came to pray in the course of his office, during the oblation of his incense, he could not utter a word, and was under a necessity of making signs to the people, that an angel had appeared to him in the temple, and that he was deprived of the faculty of speech, as a punishment for his doubting the fulfilment of an event he had been foretold of concerning him. Then departing to his own house (the days of his ministration being accomplished), his wife Elizabeth, according to the prediction of the angel, conceived; and retired into a private place. Six months after the conception of Elizabeth, in the thirty-third year of Herod the Great, king of Judæa, and the twenty-sixth after the establishment of Augustus Cæsar in the imperial dignity, the same angel, Gabriel, who had foretold the birth of John the Baptist to Zacharias, was sent to Nazareth, a small city of Galilee, about sixty miles almost north of Jerusalem; his business was to foretell the nativity of Jesus Christ, to the blessed Mary, who was chosen of God to be his mother. She was a mean but holy virgin, of the family of David, espoused * to one Joseph, a man of the same condition and family, who probably, as well as the virgin, was frequently praying to God for the accomplishment of his promises in the birth of the Messiah. The angel appeared suddenly in the room where Mary was, and thus saluted her: Hail, happy virgin, favoured of God! the Lord is with thee; on thee will he bestow singular blessings, and all nations shall call thee happiest of women.

Such an address, from so exalted a being, greatly alarmed the virgin, to allay whose fear, and encourage whose heart, the angel related, in most rapturous terms, the subject of his embassy, which was to assure her, That she was chosen by God, to the greatest honour which could be conferred on a mortal, and which would perpetuate her memory; an honour no less than that of being mother of the promised and long-expected Messiah, who upon earth should be called Jesus, because he should save his people from their sins.

The Spirit of God was extremely accurate in his description concerning the incarnation of God: it was fit no circumstance should be omitted in that story, whereon the faith and salvation of all the world depends. As the first preacher of the gospel was an angel, that office must needs be glorious, which derives itself from such a predecessor: as God appointed his angel to be the first preacher, so he hath since called his preachers angels: the message is well suited; an angel comes to a virgin, Gabriel to Mary; he that was by signification the strength of God, to her that was by signification exalted by God, to the conceiving of him that was the God of strength: to a maid, but espoused; a maid for the honour of virginity, espoused for the honour of marriage. The marriage was in a sort made, not consummated, through the instinct of him that meant to make her not an example, but a miracle of women: in this whole work God would have nothing ordinary: it was fit that she should be a married virgin, which should be a virgin-mother: He that meant to take man's nature without man's corruption, would be the Son of Man without man's seed, would be the

* Espousing or betrothing was nothing else, but a solemn promise of marriage, made by two persons, each to other, at such a distance of time, as they agreed upon. The manner of performing this espousal was, either by a writing, or by a piece of silver given to the bride, or by cohabitation. The writing, that was prepared on these occasions, ran in this form—"On such a day of such a month, in such a year, A, the son of A, has said to B, the daughter of B, Be thou my spouse according to the law of Moses, and the Israelites, and I will give thee for the portion of thy virginity, the sum of two hundred zuzims, as it is ordained by the law. And the said B has consented to become his spouse upon these conditions, which the said A has promised to perform upon the day of marriage. To this the said A obliges himself; and for this he engages all his goods, even as far as the cloak which he wears upon his shoulder. Moreover he promises to perform all that is intended in contracts of marriage, in favour of the Israelitish women. Witnesses, A, B, C." The promise by a piece of silver, and without writing, was made before witnesses, when the young man said to his mistress, Receive this piece of silver, as a pledge that you shall become my spouse. After such espousal was made (which was generally when the parties were young), the woman continued with her parents several months, if not some years (at least till she was arrived at the age of puberty), before she was brought home, and her marriage consummated: for so we find that Sampson's wife remained with her parents a considerable time after her espousal, Judg. xiv. 15. and that the blessed virgin was discernibly with child before she and her intended husband came together, Matt. i. 18. Whether this method of betrothing was at first ordained, or only approved by God, Deut. xx. 7. or whether it be now of any obligation, to us christians, we shall not pretend to determine. 'Tis certain, that it has nothing that is typical, nothing of the carnal ordinance in it, but something very proper and convenient, viz. that the parties contracted may have some intermediate time to think seriously of the great change, they are going to make in their conditions; to discourse more freely together about their domestic affairs; and to implore God's blessing and protection over them and theirs, in all the changes and events of this mortal life.



The ANNUNCIATION.



feed of the woman without man; and amongst all women, of a pure virgin; but amongst virgins, of one espoused, that there might be at once a witness, and a guardian of her fruitful virginity; if the same God had not been the author of virginity and marriage, he had never countenanced virginity by marriage.

Whither doth this glorious angel come to find the mother of him that was God, but to obscure Galilee? A part which even the Jews themselves despised, as forsaken of their privileges, "Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." Behold, an angel comes to that Galilee out of which no prophet comes; and the God of prophets and angels descends to be conceived in that Galilee out of which no prophet ariseth: he that filleth all places, makes no difference of places: it is the person which gives honour and privilege to the place, not the place to the person; as the presence of God makes the heaven, the heaven doth not make the honour glorious; no blind corner of Nazareth can hide the blessed virgin from the angel: the favourable and all-pervading eye of God will find out his children wheresoever they are withdrawn.

It is the method of God to seek out the most despised, on whom to bestow his honours; we can neither run away from the judgments, nor from the mercies of our God: the cottages of Galilee are preferred by God to the famous palaces of Jerusalem: he cares not how homely he converses with his own; why then should we be transported with the outward glory of places, while our God regards it not? We are not of the angel's taste, if we had not rather be with the blessed Virgin at Nazareth, than with the proud dames in the court of Jerusalem: it is a great vanity to respect any thing above goodness, and to disesteem goodness on account of any defect or want. The angel salutes the virgin; he prays not to her; he only salutes her as a saint, but prays not to her as a goddess.

It was no ordinary favour that the virgin found in heaven; no mortal creature was ever thus graced, that he should take part of her nature, who was the God of nature; that he, who made all things, should make his human body of hers; that her womb should yield that flesh which was personally united to the Godhead; that she should bear him who upholds the world: "Lo, thou shalt conceive and bear a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus." It is a question, whether there be more wonder in the conception, or in the fruit: in the conception of the virgin, or in Jesus conceived; both are marvellous; but the former doth not more exceed all other wonders, than the latter exceeds it. For the child of a virgin is the re-improvement of that power which created the world; but that God should be incarnate of a virgin, was an abasement of his majesty, and an exaltation of the creature beyond all example. Mary says not to the angel, Who and whence art thou? What kingdom is this, thou speakest of? Where and when shall it be erected? But, meekly supposing all those strange things would be done, she insists only on that which necessarily requires a further intimation, and does not distrust, but demand: neither does she say, this cannot be; nor, how can this be? but how shall this be? so the angel answers, as one that knew he needed not to satisfy curiosity; but to inform judgment, and uphold faith: he doth not therefore tell her of the manner, but of the author of this act: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee." It is enough to know: who is the undertaker, no mother knows the manner of her natural conception; what presumption would it then be for flesh and blood, to search how the son of God took flesh and blood of his creature? The Almighty only knows those works which he performs immediately concerning himself; those which concern us, he hath revealed: Secrets to God, things revealed to us.

No sooner had the angel departed, than Mary set out for the mountainous country of Judea, though at a very remote distance from Nazareth, in order to congratulate with her cousin Elizabeth on the joyful news she had received from the angel concerning her. The rapture and delight which filled the minds of Mary, Joseph, and Elizabeth, on the occasion of this salutation, can alone be expressed by the affecting description recorded by the Evangelist Luke, who is peculiar for the beauty of his style and elegance of his expressions. That Evangelist writes, that the salutation of Mary had such an effect upon Elizabeth,

Elizabeth, that on her hearing of the miraculous event which had befallen the virgin, the babe leaped in her womb; and that she, being inspired with a holy delight, on the approaching prospect of the nativity of her Saviour, exclaimed with rapture, "And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Luke i. 43. Nor did her ecstasy cease with this token of humility and joy, on the important event, in the ardour of which she evinced that prophetic influence which, while it amazed the blessed virgin, could not fail of establishing her belief in what the angel had foretold; for she repeated the very words expressed by the angel, in his salutation of the holy virgin: "Blessed art thou among women," together with a quotation from the psalms, and "blessed is the fruit of thy womb." For as Mary conceived the Seed long promised, and earnestly desired, the Seed, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, he could not but be blessed himself, according to the words of the psalmist; "His name shall continue as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed."

The happy virgin, catching the holy flame from the aged Elizabeth, broke out into an humble acknowledgment of her unworthiness, and the wonderful grace of the Almighty, in appointing her to the exalted honour of bearing in her womb the Redeemer of Israel, in those known words, "My soul doth magnify the Lord," &c. Thus having, by this visit, confirmed herself in the belief of the prediction of the angel Gabriel, when the period of Elizabeth's pregnancy approached, she returned to Nazareth, having resided about three months in Judæa.

Not long after the departure of Mary, Elizabeth brought forth her son, the appointed harbinger of the King of Glory; and on the eighth day after his birth, according to the Judaical custom, he was circumcised and called, by appointment of the angel, John, alluding, in the Hebrew tongue, to the gracious display of the wisdom and goodness God was about to manifest to the world, by the spreading of the gospel of his Son, of whom this John was the appointed forerunner and harbinger.

As soon as the promise was fulfilled, the aged priest had his speech restored to him, and immediately broke out into praise and rapture at the marvellous works of God, in strains which astonished all around him. This surprising event greatly alarmed the adjacent country, who were divided in their opinions concerning the peculiar nature and qualities of a child, whose birth was attended with so many extraordinary circumstances. Indeed these incidents were worthy of general admiration; that he who was to be the forerunner of the mighty Saviour of Israel, should not make his entrance on life in an obscure and common manner, but with particular tokens of the favour of heaven, in order to attract the observation of his countrymen, and excite their attention to that ministry which he was called to by God, even the preparation of the people for the reception of the Messiah who was shortly to appear in flesh.

Good old Zacharias, seeing the finger of God so manifestly appear according to the predictions relating to his family, burst into a holy rapture; the same power that at first had miraculously tied up his tongue, did now as wonderfully give it liberty to praise the Almighty God who had wrought such prodigies among his people.

The time was now at hand, when the great joy that the birth of the Baptist had occasioned, should be augmented by the more miraculous birth of the Saviour of mankind, which was to be the perfect completion of what the angel Gabriel had promised to both their mothers. The holy virgin therefore being returned from Hebron to Nazareth, Joseph prepares to consummate his marriage with his espoused wife; when to his great amazement she was big with child. Though the seeming disappointment deeply affected him, yet being of a gentle disposition, he was unwilling to expose the honour of the family, which he mistakenly thought she had stained; or her to inevitable death, according to the sentence of the law; and therefore, the better to conceal the disgrace of the family, as he thought, he resolves to divorce her privately. But while he laboured under these anxious deliberations, an angel of God appeared to him in a dream, and with this comfortable message dispels his uneasy cares: "Fear not, Joseph, thou son of David, to take Mary thy wife; for she is innocent, and that which she has conceived is of the Holy Ghost, by the virtue and power of the Most High: and she shall bring forth a son, whose name by the heavenly decree is to be called



VIRGIN MARY visits ELIZABETH.



called Jesus," Joseph complied with the voice of heaven most cheerfully; for no sooner did the morning dawn appear, than he arose from his couch, and obeyed the commands of the Most High, by relating to his wife his being assured of her innocence, and that he was enjoined to restore her to former favour; whereupon he imparted to her the manner of this extraordinary revelation.

C H A P T E R II.

AUGUSTUS COMMANDS AN ENROLMENT OF ALL THE ROMAN EMPIRE. THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST. AN ANGEL RELATETH IT TO THE SHEPHERDS; AND MANY SING PRAISES TO GOD FOR IT. CHRIST CIRCUMCISED, AND PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE. THE EASTERN SAGES COME TO WORSHIP JESUS, JOSEPH FLEES WITH THE CHILD INTO EGYPT. MASSACRE OF THE INFANTS BY ORDER OF HEROD; AND HIS DEATH. JOSEPH BRINGS CHRIST OUT OF EGYPT TO GALILEE.

AT this period of time which the evangelist (Luke ii. 1.) speaks of: "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." The decree of Augustus, here mentioned, was not that all the world, or the whole Roman empire, which is what the evangelist means, should be immediately taxed, as our translation seems to import, but that persons of all ranks, ages, and conditions should be enrolled, according to their respective families and estates. Several reasons are given for this procedure of the emperor. One author informs us, that it was because the taxes should be paid by an equal and moderate proportion; those who were in power before Augustus having taken from their subjects according to their arbitrary pleasure. Another tells us, that it was partly that men's properties and estates, which were become uncertain and confused by the civil wars, should be made secure to them; and that therefore it was necessary for them to make out their descent and families. Some have affirmed, that this enrolment was only an effect of the emperor's curiosity, without any view either to the enriching of his treasury, or reforming the excesses of those who had gone before him. If this last opinion be true, it sufficiently confirms our opinion, that he was over-ruled herein by the special providence of God, who took this method of bringing to pass what he had before declared by his prophet Micah, and thus made it necessary for the virgin Mary to go to Bethlehem, in order to her being delivered of her heavenly burthen. But let the cause of this imperial decree have been what it will, we have the concurrent testimony of the authors of that time, that such a survey of the Roman subjects was actually made. I have also the authority of the greatest number of commentators and paraphrasts to support what I have said concerning Publius Sulpicius Quirinus, that he was sent into Syria with a special commission on this occasion; nevertheless, as this is not universally agreed to, and may not perhaps, after all, be the most rational manner of understanding the Evangelist, I shall now give my readers a system of this whole affair, extracted from the learned and ingenious Dr. Prideaux, whose decisions I have chiefly relied on, because his opinion, on those subjects of criticism which he has entered into, has never yet been fairly confuted.

Augustus having issued out a decree for taking a description or survey of the whole Roman empire, such as should contain an account of all the persons, possessions, and estates therein, and the taxes issuable from them; it was executed in this year wherein Christ was born in Judæa, in the manner as St. Luke in his gospel relates. Such an account used to be taken of the citizens of Rome every fifth year, and they had officers appointed for that purpose called Censors. Their business was, to make a registry of all the Roman citizens, their wives and children, with their age, qualities, trade, offices and estates, real and personal. Augustus first extended this to the provinces, and three several times during his reign he caused the like enumeration to be made throughout all the Roman empire. The first was in the year when he himself was the sixth time, and M. Agrippa the second

time, consuls, and twenty eight years before the christian æra. The second time was in the consulship of C. Martius Censorinus, and C. Asinius Gallus, before the christian æra eight years. And the last time, in the consulship of Sextus Pompeius Nepos, and Sextus Apuleius Nepos, in the year of the christian æra Fourteen. In the first and last time he executed this with the assistance of a colleague; but the second time, which is the description St. Luke refers to, he did it by himself alone.

The eighth year before the vulgar æra, in which this decree was issued out, was only three whole years before the birth of Christ, and so long was this description carrying on through Syria, Cœlofryia, Phœnicia, and Judæa, before it came to Bethlehem. When it came thither, Joseph and Mary were called from Nazareth in Galilee, the place of their habitation, to this ancient city of David, to which they originally belonged, that their circumstances might be described and registered among the rest of the same family: and while they tarried here, Mary was delivered of the promised Seed. That we allow three years for the execution of this decree, can give no just reason for exception: for supposing the execution of it in every province of the Roman empire to have been committed to the governor of it (and that it was so in Syria, is attested by Tertullian), three years time was little enough for carrying it through Syria, Cœlofryia, Phœnicia, and Judæa, all which together made up the Roman province of Syria. Joab was nine months in taking an account of only ten of the tribes of Israel, and of no more in them than of the men that were able to bear arms: whereas the account taken by the decree of Augustus, at the time of our Saviour's birth, extended to all manner of persons, and also to their professions, estates, qualities, and other circumstances. And when a computation of this latter kind was taken in England, by the command of William the Conqueror (we mean that which was called the *Domesday-book*), it was six years in making, though the whole kingdom of England was then not near half so big as the Roman province of Syria.

But though this survey of Judæa was made at the time we have mentioned, and every man's estate thus estimated according to the custom of the Romans when they levied taxes, yet no payment of any taxes was made by the Jews till the twelfth year after; till then Herod, and after him Archelaus his son, reigning in Judea, the taxes of that country were paid to those princes only: but when Archelaus was deposed, and Judæa put under the government of a Roman Proculator, then first were taxes paid for that country to the Romans, Publius Sulpicius Quirinus, who in Greek is called Cyrenius, being at that time president of Syria. If it be asked for what reason this description was made, if no taxes were to be paid immediately upon it? The answer is, Augustus was then at work upon the composition of a book, containing such a survey of the Roman empire as that which our *Domesday-Book* doth for England. Tacitus Suetonius, and Dion Cassius, make mention of this book, and describe it in the manner in which we here represent it. Now, in order to his making this work thoroughly complete, his decree for the survey was made to extend to the depending kingdoms, as well as the provinces of the empire, though the taxes of these kingdoms were always paid to their proper sovereigns, and only those of the provinces to the Romans. What revenues the emperors had from the dependent kingdoms, were from the princes of them, and not the people; for the people paid the taxes to their princes, and the princes their tribute to the Roman emperors: nevertheless, this dependency put it into the power of the emperors to take such a description as we are now treating of.

Putting all this together, the sum and series of the matter appears to be as followeth. Augustus, three years before the birth of Christ, issued out a decree for this description of the whole Roman empire, including the dependent states, kingdoms, &c. and committed the execution of it to the governor of each province, both for his own proper district, and the states, kingdoms, and dominions, which by their neighbouring situation were more immediately dependent thereon. By this means, the survey of Judæa came into the charge of Sentius Saturninus, at that time president of Syria, who having gone through the other parts of his division, executed his commission at Bethlehem at the time when Christ was born. But notwithstanding this, no tax was here levied till the deposing of Archelaus above-mentioned, in the twelfth year after, when Cyrenius, or Quirinus,

rinus, was governor of Syria; hence St. Luke speaks of two distinct particular actions, performed at very different times, when he mentions the decree of Augustus, and the taxing under Cyrenius. What is said in his first verse of the second chapter, where, as we have before observed, the word "enrolled" ought to have been in the room of "taxed," is to be understood only of the survey or description under Saturninus, whereof we have been speaking; but in the second verse, where Cyrenius is mentioned, we are to understand a real taxation that was laid upon the Jews after the deposition of Archelaus. This reconciles the evangelist with Josephus, from whom it is manifest that Cyrenius was not the governor of Syria, neither was there any tax levied in Judæa till after Archelaus was deposed, and his dominions put under a Roman procurator. Thus a different manner of rendering only two verses of St. Luke's gospel, at once removes all the difficulties that have been stated concerning his chronology: and this interpretation, which we argue for, is not less natural than what is at present received; for it leaves the second verse in a parenthesis, as it now stands in our Bibles, and the alteration it makes is chiefly in one word, which we have already proved to be not accurately translated. Thus have I done with this affair, and at the same time with my extract from Dr. Prideaux, whom I have rather abridged than transcribed: I have also taken the liberty, in one or two places, to transpose the order of his observations, and to add an occasional remark or two, which I found elsewhere, or which seemed to arise from the subject.

The first notice of our Lord's nativity was to shepherds watching over their flocks by night. For the better understanding of this, we may observe, that night was divided into four watches, which were, the evening watch, the midnight watch, the cock-crowing, and the morning. These are all mentioned by name, in different parts of the Bible. The first of them ended at nine at night, the second at twelve, the third at three in the morning, and the fourth at six. These were so distributed among the shepherds of the country, that such a number of them might always be in the field; every party by night taking their turns, so that when one watch was ended, the same number of fresh men succeeded to the charge. The reason of this care was, to preserve their sheep from thieves and wild beasts, and they had little cottages erected for that purpose. We may here take notice that the word shepherd is very honourable in the Bible: Abel was a keeper of sheep, according to Moses; and the greatest part of the ancient patriarchs were of the same profession. The Messiah is often mentioned in the character of a shepherd; and our Lord applies the title of a good shepherd to himself, "because he lays down his life for the sheep." But, not to insist on these testimonies, we may suppose that the shepherds among the Jews, at the time of our Lord's birth, were, as they have generally been represented in all ages, a simple, honest-hearted sort of people, who were therefore proper persons to receive these good tidings, as they were free from those prejudices which would almost unavoidably have risen in the minds of politer people, at their being informed that the Saviour of the world was born in a stable, and to be seen lying in a manger.

In the year from the creation 4000, after mankind in general had continued above two thousand years under the law of nature, and the Jews almost two thousand more, under the typical dispensation delivered by God to his servant Moses, when the fullness of time was come, and the expectation of the Messiah, founded upon repeated promises and prophecies, was at the height, it pleased the eternal Father to send his only Son into the world, to accomplish the stupendous work of salvation.

It is wonderful how all circumstances at this time concurred to verify the predictions that were on record (not only among the Jews, the distinguished people of God, who were, on that account, left without excuse, but even among the Gentiles), and which usher into the world this glorious Deliverer.

Though some of our best historians have differed respecting the year of our Lord's birth; yet, from the prophet Isaiah, we have an account of the extraordinary and miraculous manner of his birth, that he "should be born of a virgin," and his "name be Immanuel;" of his incomparable furniture, with gifts and graces for the execution of his office, of the entertainment he was to meet with in the world, and the nature and design of those sufferings

sufferings which he was to undergo. The place of his birth was foretold by Micah to be Bethlehem Ephrata, the least of the cities of Judah, but honoured above all the rest with the nativity of a Prince, who was "to be a ruler in Israel, whose goings forth had been everlasting." To conclude, the prophet Daniel fixes the particular period of his coming, expressly affirming, that the Messiah should appear in the world, and be cut off as a victim for the sins of the people, at the expiration of seventy prophetic weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, which accordingly came literally to pass. The greatest part of the best and most modern chronologers allow the full term of four years to this difference; and by so doing, are enabled to resolve more difficulties than those who embrace any other system. These two considerations, I believe, are sufficient to support the chronology I have followed: for if an error be allowed, it may as well consist of four years, as of less; and where there is room for different opinions, that is always to be preferred which accounts for the greatest number of difficulties.

We may trace the origin of this mistake; and we have good authority to prove, that christians did not begin to compute by the æra of the nativity of Christ till the five hundred and twenty-seventh year of that æra; a time when the state of learning was far from being in a flourishing condition; and then this computation was introduced by Dionysius Exiguus, a Scythian by birth, and at that time a Roman abbot. Our countryman Bede, taking it from Dionysius, used it in all his writings; and the great reputation of this monk recommended it to the general use of christians, especially in these western parts. Thus is this whole matter easily accounted for to any reasonable person: for had the church, from the beginning of christianity, calculated the times by this epocha, there could then have been no mistake therein; but at a distance of five hundred and twenty-seven years, and in an age when so few helps to the clearing up a chronological difficulty could be procured, we may rather wonder that the error was no greater, than that the true year was mistaken at all.

We find more difficulty in seeking for the true month and day of our Lord's nativity, than for the year of it. Some very ancient traditions direct us to the twenty-fifth of December, which day is accordingly kept as one of the great festivals of the western christians. But Mr. Mede, Dr. Lightfoot, and others, have given very probable reasons for fixing it to the month of September, and particularly to the Jewish feast of tabernacles. M. Le Clerc, after having found out the year of Herod's death, in order to gain some light to the sacred chronology, goes on to this effect: "It appears, from St. Luke's gospel, that Jesus was born six months after John the Baptist; but since it is undetermined in what month John was born, nothing of any certainty can be inferred from this. Some learned men, indeed, have pretended to find out the week in which the class of Abias, to which Zacharias belonged, executed the priest's office in the temple; but what they say is built upon such weak foundations, that in so serious an affair it is much better to leave matters just as we find them, than go on to heap conjecture upon conjecture."

It is very well known that while it was the general opinion of the western churches that Christ was born on the twenty-fifth of December, the churches of the east contended as strongly for the sixth of January; alledging, that they must needs have a better insight into this affair than the occidental christians, who were at so much greater a distance from the place of his birth than themselves. Vossius has indeed collected a great many testimonies of the ancients upon this head; but whoever diligently examines the matter, and considers moreover, that in the primitive times of christianity neither of these days was particularly consecrated as the anniversary of our Lord's nativity, will be easily convinced that there are no certain grounds for determining on either side. This difficulty is obvious to every man of letters; and therefore M. Le Clerc tells us, that having, as he imagines, found out the true year, he will not affirm or deny that Christ was born in this or that month, but rather chuses to leave the prosecution of such a doubtful inquiry.

The application to the time of our Lord's nativity, which I have made of the prophecy which mentions the turning of "swords into plough-shares, and spears into pruning-hooks," will not be thought improper, when the state of the Roman empire at that time

time is considered. It was usual to lay open the gates of the temple of Janus at Rome, in time of war, and shut them whenever the republic was at peace with her neighbours. They had been shut only five times from the first building of Rome. The first time was in the reign of Numa; the second after the end of the first Punic war; the third after Augustus had vanquished Antony and Cleopatra, and thereby reduced the whole Roman empire into a quiet submission to himself; the fourth time, on the said emperor's return from the war which he had with the Cantabrians in Spain; and the fifth time, in the very year wherein Christ was born, during the reign of the same Augustus. There was, at this last time of shutting up the temple of Janus, a general peace all over the world, and it continued for twelve years together; so that the use I have made of the above recited prophecy is at least very natural, whatever might be the immediate sense of the inspired author.

The year of the reigns of Augustus and Herod, to which I have fixed the happy æra of the angel's appearing to Mary, is borrowed from the chronology of Dr. Prideaux, who numbers the years of Augustus from the victory at Actium, when he became absolute master of the Roman empire, thirteen years after the murder of Julius Cæsar, and twelve after the setting up the triumvirate, between himself, Antony, and Lepidus.

The reign of Herod begins with his taking Jerusalem, about three years after he was declared king of the Jews at Rome, when, upon the death of Antigonus, he was settled in the full possession of Judæa. This nice computation makes the twenty-sixth year of Augustus fall in with the thirty-third of Herod, and the four thousand seven hundred and ninth of the Julian period, the exact time of our Lord's conception.

This Herod was an Idumean, whose family were profelytes to the Jewish religion: he was born seventy-two years before the vulgar æra of our Lord's nativity, and in the seventh year of Alexandra queen of the Jews. In the twenty-fifth year of his age, he was made governor of Galilee, and at last raised himself to the regal dignity, upon the ruins of the Asmonean family. His father Antipas was a noble Idumean, and his mother Cyprus of an illustrious family among the Arabians. This Antipas, to bring his name to the Greek form, called himself Antipater, and by that name he is most commonly known in history. Nicholas Damascenus having published a general history in the lifetime of Herod, including the actions of that prince, whose great favourite he was, the better to flatter his master and benefactor, endeavoured to derive the pedigree of Antipater from one of the principal Jews who returned from the Babylonish captivity; others have pretended, in order to blast his character, that Antipater was only the son of one Herod, a sexton of the temple of Apollo at Ascalon; and that, being taken prisoner while a child, by some thieves of Idumea, and his father not being able to redeem him, he was made a slave in that country, and so instructed in the Jewish religion; from which mean original, they tell us, he grew up to the figure which he afterwards made in the world. But Josephus, who best knew the truth, and is the most likely to relate it without disguise on either side, declares as above, that he was nobly born, and that his father, who was also called Antipas, was governor of Idumea, under king Alexander Janneus and Alexandra his queen: so that Herod was an Idumean by country, and a Jew by religion. This account of Josephus, as it is in itself the most probable, so it proves the accomplishment of Jacob's prophecy, concerning the departure of the sceptre from Judah at the time of Shiloh's appearance, altogether as well as what the fathers have advanced so much to the prejudice of Herod's family. But the invention of Damascenus ought by no means to be received, if we understand this prophecy of Jacob in a literal sense: for if Herod was descended from the Jews of the Babylonish captivity, it would be difficult to prove that the sceptre in his time was translated from Judah, the people that returned by permission of the kings of Persia consisting chiefly of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. There are, however, some unavoidable difficulties, which attend such a literal interpretation of the patriarch's words, that are independent of Herod and his family; and therefore I shall examine these matters more particularly hereafter, when I come to trace the progress and changes of the supreme power among the Jews, from the beginning of their state till they became entirely subject to the Romans.

To return: The edict beforementioned went not so much out from Augustus, as from the court of heaven. What, did Cæsar know Joseph and Mary? His charge was universal to a world of subjects, through all the Roman empire: God intended this cessing or mustering only for the blessed virgin and her son, that Christ might be born where he should: Cæsar meant to fill his coffers, God meant to fulfill his prophecies, and so to fulfill them, that they whom it concerned might not feel the accomplishment: if God had directly commanded the virgin to go up to Bethlehem, she had seen the intention, and expected the issue; but that wise Moderator of all things, who works his will in us, loves so to do it, as may be least compatible with our foresight and acquaintance; and would have us fall under his decrees unawares, that we may so much the more adore the depths of his Providence: every creature walks blindfold; only He that dwells in light, sees whither they go.

Doubtless, blessed Mary meant to have been delivered of her divine burden at home, and little thought of changing the place of conception for another of her holy child's birth: that house was honoured by the angel, yea, by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, no one could equally satisfy her hopes, or desires: it was fit, that he, which made choice of the womb, wherein his Son should be conceived, should make choice of the place, where his Son should be born: as the work is all his, so will he alone contrive all the circumstances to his own wise ends. If wars be a sign of the time of his second coming, peace was a sign of his first: his edict had gone forth; now was the sceptre departed from Judah: it was the time for Shiloh to come; no power was left in the Jews, but to obey: Augustus is the emperor of the world; under him, Herod is the king of Judæa; Cyrenius is president of Syria; Jewry hath nothing of her own. For if Herod were a king, yet he was no Jew; and if he had been a Jew, yet he was no otherwise a king, than tributary, and titular: the edict came out from Augustus, was executed by Cyrenius: Herod is no actor in this service: gain and glory are the ends of this taxation, each man professed himself a subject, and paid for the privilege of his servitude: now their very heads were not their own, but must be paid for to the head of a foreign state: they who before stood upon the terms of their immunity, stoop at the last: but God sends them a King of their own, to whom Cæsar himself must be a subject. The goodness of our God picks out the most needful times for our relief and comfort: our extremities give him the most glory. Whither must Joseph and Mary come to be taxed, but unto Bethlehem, David's city? The very place proves their descent: he that succeeded David in his throne, must succeed him in the place of his birth: so clearly was Bethlehem designed to this honour by the prophets, that even the priests and the scribes could point Herod unto it, and assured him, the King of the Jews could be no where else born. Bethlehem, justly termed the house of bread, the bread that came down from heaven, is there given to the world; whence should we have the bread of life, but from the house of bread?

It was no less than four days journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem: how just an excuse might the blessed virgin have pleaded for her absence? What woman ever undertook such a journey so near her delivery? and doubtless Joseph, who was now taught of God to love and honour her, was loth to draw forth a dear wife, in so unwieldy a case, into manifest hazard.

After many steps are Joseph and Mary come to Bethlehem: the plight wherein she was, would not allow any speed; and the forced delay in the journey causes disappointment: the end was worse than the way; there was no rest in the way, there was no room in the inn. It could not be, but that there were many of the kindred of Joseph and Mary at that time in Bethlehem: for there were both their ancestors born, if not themselves; and thither came up all the cousins of their blood: yet there and then doth the holy virgin want room to lay either her head, or her burden. If the house of David had not lost all mercy and good nature, a daughter of David (the Beloved) could not, so near the time of her travail, have been destitute of lodging in the city of David. Little did the Bethlehemites think what a guest they refused; else they would gladly have opened their doors to him, who was able to open the gates of heaven to them. Thou camest to thine own, and thy own

own received thee not : how can it trouble us to be rejected of the world, which is not ours ? What wonder is it, if thy servants wandered abroad in sheeps' skins, and goats' skins, destitute and afflicted, when their Lord is denied harbour ? How should all the world blush at this indignity of Bethlehem ! Here was neither friend to entertain, nor servant to attend, nor place wherein to be attended, only the poor beasts gave way to the God of all the world : it is the great mystery of godliness, that God was manifested in the flesh, and seen of angels ; but here (which was the chief of all wonders) the very beasts might see their Maker : for that those spirits should see God in the flesh, was not so strange, as for the brute creatures to see Him who was the God of spirits : He, that would be led into the wilderness amongst the wild beasts to be tempted, would come into the house of beasts to be born, that from the height of his divine glory his humiliation might be the greater.

That the visitation might be answerable to the homeliness of the place, attendants and provision, who shall come to congratulate his birth, but poor shepherds ? The kings of the earth rest at home, and have no summons to attend him, by whom they reign : so God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty : in an obscure time (the night) unto obscure men (shepherds) doth God manifest the light of his Son by glorious angels ; It is not our meanness, O God, that can exclude us from the best of thy mercies ; yea thus far dost thou respect persons, that thou hast put down the mighty, and exalted them of low degree. If these shepherds had been snoring in their beds, they had no more seen angels, nor heard news of their Saviour, than their neighbours ; their vigilance is honoured with this heavenly vision : they who are industrious in any calling, are capable of further blessings, whereas the idle are fit for nothing but temptation. No less than a whole choir of angels are worthy to sing the hymn of glory to God, for the incarnation of his Son. For suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host : and after the angel had told his message in plain song, the whole chorus joined in unison, and sang an hymn to the tune and sense of heaven, where glory is paid to God in eternal and never-ceasing offices, and whence good-will descends upon men in perpetual and ever-flowing torrents. Their song was, "Glory be to God on high ! on earth peace, good-will towards men." By this song not only referring to the strange peace which at that time put all the world in ease, but to the great peace which this new-born Prince should purchase by his blood.

The signs which the angel gave to discover the babe were no marks of lustre and vanity ; but they should find, 1. A babe, 2. Swaddled, 3. Lying in a manger : whom, according to the information of the sacred missionary, they found wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. This event, so exactly conformable to the angel's prediction, equally delighted and amazed them ; nor could they conceal the purport of his mission, but published abroad all they had seen or heard.

While they were in Galilee there came wise men from the East. Many questions have been started concerning the Magi, or wise men, who came to Bethlehem to adore Jesus Christ soon after he was born. It is asked, who they were ? how many there were of them ? whence they came ? what was the motive of their coming ? how long it was after the birth of Christ when they arrived at Jerusalem ? what was the star that appeared to them ? We shall pursue the best light that can be obtained in this affair, and consider these particulars in their order. Several of the fathers have expressly said they were kings ; and others, who have taken up their opinion, have contended very strongly for it ; but it is now commonly thought that they were philosophers of the Magian sect, whose chief study was astronomy. The word Magi, by which they were distinguished, very strongly supports this last conjecture : for though Magus was at that time a sort of common name for a learned and wise man ; yet as the sect to whom it properly belonged was then very populous in the East, and the persons mentioned by the Evangelist are said to come from that quarter, I see no reason why we should not understand it in the original sense. This opinion is at least as well grounded as any other ; I may say much better, because it puts the most obvious interpretation upon the words of the Evangelist. Let us therefore see what were

were the principal tenets and characteristics of the Magians or Magi of the East: these wise men were of the latter sect.

All the idolaters in the world were anciently divided into two sects; the worshippers of images, and the worshippers of fire: the first of these were called Sabæans, and the latter Magians.

The next thing to be inquired, is, How these men could guess at the birth of our Lord, from the appearance of a star? Abul-Pharagius, an Arabian christian, tells us, That Zerdusht, or Zoroaster, foretold to his Magians the coming of Christ; and that at the time of his birth there should appear a wonderful star, which should shine by day as well as by night: and therefore left in command with them, that when that star should appear, they should follow the directions of it, and go to the place where he should be born, and there offer gifts, and pay their adoration unto him: in obedience to which command, the wise men came from the East, that is from Persia, to worship Christ at Bethlehem. And so far Sharistani, a Mahometan writer, agrees with Abul-Pharagius, as that he tells us, that Zoroaster foretold the coming of a wonderful person in the latter times, who should reform the world in religion and righteousness; that kings and princes should be obedient to him, and give him their assistance in promoting the true religion, and all the works thereof. But what these ascribe to Zoroaster, others attribute to the prophecy of Balaam: "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall arise out of Israel, which shall smite the princes of Moab, and destroy, bear rule over, all the children of Seth; and Edom shall be a possession to him."

Neither of these opinions are thought to be well founded: Zoroaster was certainly a grand impostor, and therefore it is unlikely that he should be so well acquainted with the divine will, as to prophesy the coming of Christ in such clear terms, and mention a token of it that is not to be met with in the writings of the true prophets: it is therefore suspected, that the Arabian authors took their account out of the legendary writings of the eastern christians. And if the Magians had received their information from Balaam's prophecy, they might as well have expected to see a sceptre as a star; for he affirms the same thing of them both; besides, we know of no record wherein this prophecy was preserved, but the books of Moses, which were not believed by the Magians; and had it been elsewhere preserved, yet, as what Balaam there prophesies has so plain a relation to some future prince, rather than a real star, it is not likely that any body should have understood him in this manner, till after the birth of Christ, and the appearance of that extraordinary phenomenon, had given some colour to this interpretation.

Others, who attribute this knowledge of the Magi to some prophecy of Daniel when he was among them, seem at first view to have more reason on their side, especially if Zoroaster himself was a disciple of that prophet, as we have on very good grounds supposed him to be. But we have no prophecy of Daniel now extant, which could have given them this particular information; and it is not probable that such a prediction was ever delivered, and made so public as to be taken notice of by other nations, which yet was not preserved by the Jews among their sacred writings.

They who contend for the Magians being natives of Arabia, think it most natural to believe, that they received their information by the same means as the Romans obtained many of their Sybilline prophecies; that is, by conversing with the Jews, who were continually discoursing about the Messiah's appearance. Having thus learned to expect the great King of the Jews, they, being much given to astrology, imagined he would not appear without some extraordinary sign in the heavens; and perceiving this preternatural star or light either hovering over, or pointing to, the land of Judæa, they immediately took this for a token of the completion of the Jewish prophecies, and the birth of their mighty Deliverer. That they should have learned from the Jews to expect the coming of Christ, from what country soever they came, is indeed natural enough; but we cannot conceive how they should be so certain of his birth, as to take a long journey in order to worship him, merely from their own observations of a preternatural phenomenon, and without any superior impulse. Therefore this star was not only supernatural; but

God gave these men particular revelation that this star would lead them to the very place where Christ was.

The angels direct the shepherds, the star guides the sages; the duller capacity hath the more clear and powerful helps; the wisdom of our good God proportions the means to the disposition of the persons: the wise men's astronomy had taught them, that this star was not an ordinary one, whether in sight, in brightness, or in motion. The eyes of nature might well see, that some strange news was portended to the world by it; but that this star designed the birth of the Messiah, there needed yet another light: if the star had not also had the commentary of a revelation from God, it could have led the wise men only into a fruitless wonder: give them to be the offspring of Balaam. But the true prediction of that false prophet was not warranted. If he told them, the Messiah should arise as a star out of Jacob, he did not tell them, that a star should arise far from the posterity of Jacob, at the birth of the Messiah. He that put that prophecy into the mouth of Balaam, also put this illumination into the hearts of the sages: the spirit of God is free to breathe where he listeth: many shall come from the east and the west to seek Christ, when the children of the kingdom shall be shut out: even then God did not so confine his election to the pale of the church, as that he did not sometimes look out for special instruments of his glory. Whither do these sages come, but to Jerusalem? Where should they hope to hear of the new king, but in the mother city of the kingdom?

No sooner hath the star brought them within the noise of Jerusalem, than it is vanished out of sight: God would have their eyes lead them so far, till their tongues might be set on work to win the vocal attestation of the chief priests and scribes, to the fore-appointed place of our Saviour's nativity. If the star had carried them directly to Bethlehem, the learned Jews had never searched the truth of those prophecies, wherewith they are since justly convinced: God never withdraws our helps, but for a further advantage: how much sorer our hopes seem crossed, where his name may be glorified, we cannot complain of loss.

Little did the sages think this would have troubled Herod; they had, I fear, concealed their message, if they had suspected this event: surely they thought it might be some son, or grandchild of him who then had the throne, so that this might win favour from Herod, rather than an unwelcome fear of rivalry.

Why art thou troubled, O Herod? a king is born, but such a king, whose scepter may ever sway with lawful sovereignty; yea, such a king, as one by whom kings hold their scepters, not lose them: if the wise men tell thee of a king, the star tells thee he is heavenly; here is a good cause of security, none of fear.

Herod feared, but dissembled his fear, as thinking it a shame that strangers should see that any power could arise under him, worthy of his respect or awe: out of an unwillingness therefore, to discover the impotence of his passion, he makes little ado of the matter, but only, after a privy inquisition into the time, employs the informers in the search of the person; "Go, and search diligently for the babe," &c. It was no great journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem; how easily might Herod's cruelty have secretly suborned some of his bloody courtiers to this inquiry and execution? If God had not meant to mock him, before he found himself mocked of the wise men, he would rather have sent before their journey, than after the disappointment: but that God, in whose hands all hearts are, did purposely infatuate him, that he might not find the way to so horrible a mischief.

There is no villainy so great, but it will mask itself under a shew of piety: Herod will also worship the babe: the courtesy of a false tyrant is death; a crafty hypocrite never means so ill as when he speaks fairest: the wise men are upon their way full of expectation, full of desire; I see no man either of the city, or court, to accompany them; whether distrust, or fear hindered them, I inquire not: but of so many thousand Jews, no one stirs his foot to see that king of theirs, whom strangers came so far to visit: yet were not these resolute sages discouraged with this solitariness, and small respect, nor drawn to repent of their journey, as thinking, Why do we come so far to honour a king whom no man will acknowledge? What mean we to travel so many hundred miles to see that, which the inhabitants will not look out to behold? Far otherwise: they cheerfully renew their journey to that place which the ancient light of prophecy had designed; and now behold, God encourages their holy

forwardness from heaven, by sending them their first guide; as if he had said, What need ye care for the neglect of men, when ye see Heaven honours the King whom ye seek? What joy these sages conceived, when their eyes first beheld the re-appearance of that happy star, they only can tell who, after a long and sad night of temptation, have seen the loving countenance of God shining forth upon their souls. Surely when the wise men saw the star stand still, they looked about to see what palace there might be near that station fit for the birth of a king; neither could they think that sorry shed was it which the star meant to point out; but finding their guide settled over that base roof, they go in to see what guest it held. They enter, and, O God, what a King do they find! how poor! how contemptible! wrapped in swaddling clothes, laid in straw, cradled in the manger, attended with beasts! what a sight was this, after all the glorious promises of that star, after the predictions of prophets, after the magnificence of their expectation!

All their way afforded nothing so despicable as that Babe whom they came to worship: but, agreeable to the character of those, who could not have been wise men, unless they had known that the greatest glories have arisen from mean beginnings, they fall down and worship that hidden Majesty: this meanness bred wonder in them, not contempt; they well knew the star could not lye: they who saw his star afar off in the east, when he lay swaddled in Bethlehem, also saw his royalty farther off, in the despised estate of his innocency; a royalty more than human. Neither did they lift up empty hands to him, whom they worshipped, but presented him with the most precious commodities of their country, gold, incense, myrrh; not thinking to enrich him with these, but by way of homage, acknowledging him the Lord of these. If these sages had been kings, and had offered a princely weight of gold, the blessed Virgin had not needed, in her purification, to have offered two young pigeons, as the sign of her poverty: as God loves not empty hands, so he measures fullness by the affection: let it be gold, or incense, or myrrh, that we offer him, it cannot but please him who doth not use to ask how much, but how affectionately given.

After the expiration of eight days from the birth of Christ, he was circumcised, according to the Mosaic institution. After the circumcision of the Holy Infant, the next ceremonies to be performed, according to the custom of the law, were the purification of the Virgin-Mother, and the presentation of her First-born; which solemnities were to be performed forty days after the nativity, publicly in the temple, by reason of the offering to be made there; which, in pursuance of the law, is done, the Holy Virgin humbly submitting to the law, which enjoined women in general to purify themselves, though she had no need of it. There could be no impurity in the Son of God; and if the best substance of a pure Virgin carried in it any taint of Adam, that was washed away by sanctification in the womb.

Her forty days were no sooner accomplished, than Mary comes up to the holy city. The rumour of a new King born at Bethlehem was yet fresh at Jerusalem, since the report of the wise men: and what good news had this been for any pick-thank to carry to the court! Here is the Babe whom the star signified, whom the sages inquired for, whom the angels proclaimed, whom the shepherds talked of, whom the scribes and high-priests notified, whom Herod seeks after! Yet to that Jerusalem, which was troubled at the report of his birth, is Christ come; and all tongues are so locked up, that he, who sent from Jerusalem to Bethlehem to seek him, finds him not, who (as if to countermine Herod) is come from Bethlehem to Jerusalem.

Well might the blessed Virgin have contended with the law, and challenged an immunity from all ceremonies of purification: What should I need purging, who did not conceive in sin? This is for those mothers whose births are unclean; mine is from God, which is purity itself: the law of Moses reaches only to those women who have conceived seed; I conceived not this seed, but the Holy Ghost in me: the law extends to the mothers of those sons who are under the law; mine is above it.

At last, she comes to the temple, but with sacrifices, either a lamb, and a pigeon, or turtle, or (in the meaner estate) two turtle doves, or young pigeons: whereof one is for a burnt-offering, the other for a sin-offering: the one for thanksgiving, the other for expia-

expiation. Every poor mother was not able to bring a lamb for her offering: there was none so poor, but might procure a pair of turtles or pigeons. These doth God both prescribe, and accept from poorer hands, no less than the beasts of a thousand mountains: he looks for somewhat of every one, not of every one alike: a mite from the poor widow is more worth to him than the talents of the wealthy. His mercy will make no difference in the acceptance; the truth and heartiness of obedience is that which he will crown in his meanest servants.

The best are not ever the wealthiest: who can despise any one for want, when the mother of Christ was not rich enough to bring a lamb for her purification? After all the presents of those eastern worshippers (who intended homage rather than enriching), the blessed Virgin comes, in the form of poverty, with her two doves unto God; she could not, without some charge, lie all this while at Bethlehem; she could not, without charge, travel from Bethlehem to Jerusalem: her offering confesseth her penury.

How glorious did the temple now seem, when the Owner was within the walls of it! Now was the hour and guest come, in regard whereof the second temple should surpass the first: this was his house, built for him, dedicated to him: there had he dwelt long in his spiritual presence, in his typical: there was nothing either placed or done within those walls, whereby he was not resembled; and now the body of those shadows is come, and presents himself where he had been ever represented: Jerusalem is now every where: there is no church, no christian heart, which is not a temple of the living God: there is no temple of God wherein Christ is not presented to his Father.

Well might these wise men have suspected Herod's secrecy: if he had meant well, what needed that whispering? That which they published in the streets, he asks in his chamber; yet they, not misdoubting his intention, purpose to fulfill his charge: it could not, in their apprehension, but be much honour to them to make their success known, that now both king and people might see it was not fancy that led them, but an assured revelation; that God, which brought them thither, diverted them, and closed their eyes, in order to guide them the best way home.

These sages made a happy journey; for now they grew into further acquaintance with God: they are honoured with a second messenger from heaven: they saw the star in the way, the angel in their bed. The star guided their journey unto Christ, the angel directed their return: they saw the star by day, a vision by night: God spake to their eyes by the star, he speaks to their heart by a dream. No doubt, they had left much noise of Christ behind them: they that did so publish his birth by their inquiry at Jerusalem, could not be silent when they found him at Bethlehem. If they had returned to Herod, I fear they had come short home: he that meant death to the Babe for the name of a king, could mean no other to those that honoured and proclaimed a new king and erected a throne besides his: they had done what they came for; and now that God, whose business they came about, takes order at once for his Son's safety, and for theirs. God, who is perfection itself, never begins any business but he makes an end, and ends happily. When our ways are his, there is no danger of miscarriage.

There was at that time in Jerusalem a venerable and religious old man, whose name was Simeon, supposed by some to be the son of Hillel, a famous doctor of the Sanhedrim. This man had long waited and earnestly prayed for the redemption of Israel; had received an express revelation from the Holy Ghost, that, notwithstanding his very great age, he should not go down to the grave before he had seen the Lord's anointed, the promised Redeemer. And while Joseph and Mary were in the temple, performing the institutions of the law, the same Holy Spirit came upon him, and directed him to repair immediately to the house of God, where he had so often attended, and there he should receive the accomplishment of the divine promise, by beholding a small Infant in the arms of a poor Virgin. The good man was obedient to the heavenly instructions; and immediately, upon sight of the blessed Infant, he took him in his arms, before all the company then present, and began to bless and glorify the name of the Lord in the following expressions: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,

peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel."

While Joseph and Mary were wondering at the great things which he spoke concerning Jesus, the holy prophet, foreseeing also the future sufferings of our Lord, and the opposition which his gospel would meet with in the world, turned himself towards them, and blessed them; and then directing his discourse to Mary, he told her, that her child was born for the happiness or destruction of many, according as they should obey or disobey the revelation he would introduce; and that he should be set as a mark among mankind, at which the obdurate and disobedient should level all the darts of their malice and fury. The reason why Simeon spoke this in particular to Mary, was because she should live to see the persecuted life and painful death of her Son, and be herself present at his crucifixion; which is implied in this part of his prophecy: "yea a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also;" intimating that the sorrow and anguish which she should feel at that time, would be equal to the most grievous tortures that could be inflicted on her own person. When Simeon had ended his benediction and prophecy, and received in his own mind all the satisfaction he wished for in this life, he retired joyfully, to wait for his approaching dissolution, which we may reasonably suppose came upon him a little while after.

At the same time there dwelt in Jerusalem a woman who was endued with a prophetic spirit: her name was Anna, the daughter of one Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser. She was eighty-four years of age, and had been a long time a widow; having never been married but once, and then living only seven years with her husband. She was remarkable for her constant attendance on the service of the temple, from which the Evangelist tells us she departed not, but served God with fastings and prayers, day and night. What person could be properer for a second witness to this first glorious appearance of Jesus Christ in public? That she might be so, and that the testimony of both sexes might be secured, it was communicated to her, by the same inspiration that had before revealed to Simeon, that the Saviour of mankind was present in the temple: and thereupon coming in where Mary and her child were, at the very instant when the good old man had finished his discourse, she immediately acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah, and gave thanks likewise to God. Nor did she this in private only, or before the company then present, but to all the religious inhabitants of Jerusalem, who expected the salvation of Israel; assuring them, that she had actually seen the great Deliverer of their nation.

When Joseph and Mary, with the child Jesus, had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, though they purposed to return to their former place of abode at Nazareth, and in reality did so after they came out of Egypt, they yet seem to have gone back to Bethlehem for the present, either for the taking some little repose, or the ordering such affairs as they had engaged in during their short stay in that city. But they had not been long returned, before an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, commanding him without delay to take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and there continue till he received further notice, because Herod was plotting against the life of Jesus, who he imagined might hereafter deprive his posterity of the kingdom. Joseph instantly obeyed the divine mandate; and that his departure might not alarm any body, and so occasion a pursuit, he left his habitation by night; and after a journey of about two hundred miles, they arrived in Egypt, where they continued till they were recalled by the angel after the death of Herod; to which the evangelist Matthew very aptly applies the words of God concerning the Hebrew nation, which are recorded by Hosea; "Out of Egypt have I called my Son." The name of the city in which the holy family are thought to have resided, was Hermopolis, where when Jesus was carried into a temple, all the statues of the idols are said to have fallen down, to the great reproach and confusion of their worshippers; agreeable to the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, "Behold the Lord shall come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence." It is reported, that Jeremiah threatened the Egyptian priests with such a destruction to their idols, when a holy virgin with
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The FLIGHT into EGYPT.



her child should come into their country; and some have imagined, that this was the reason why the Egyptians worshipped an infant in a manger, and a virgin in her bed.

Though Herod had now expected the return of the Magi for a considerable time, yet probably he might not hitherto have been so uneasy at their delay as to put himself into a violent rage; for he might imagine, either that they were gone farther to see the country, or that having been balked in their expectation, they were withdrawn secretly to avoid the popular derision: but the public declaration of Simeon and Anna, in the temple and elsewhere, had now filled him with the utmost impatience, on account of the new-born child, of whom these great things were spoken. And "when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, he was exceeding wroth;" for now began his trouble, when his purposes, which were most secret, began to be contradicted and diverted with a prevention, as if they were resisted by an all-seeing and almighty providence. He began to suspect the hand of heaven was in it; and saw there was no way for his purposes to be effected, unless he could dissolve the golden chain of predestination. Herod believed the divine oracles, foretelling that a king should be born in Bethlehem; and yet his ambition had made him so stupid, that he attempted to cancel the decree of heaven. For if he did not believe the prophecies, why was he troubled? if he did believe them, how could he possibly hinder that event which God had foretold himself would certainly bring to pass?

And therefore since God had already hindered him from the executions of a distinguishing sword, he resolved to send a sword of indiscrimination and confusion, hoping that if he killed all the babes of Bethlehem, this young king's reign also should soon determine. "He therefore sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men." For this execution was in the beginning of the second year after Christ's nativity, as in all probability we guess; not at the two years end, as some suppose: because as his malice was subtle, so he intended it should be secure; and though he had been diligent in his inquiry, and was near the time in his computation, yet he that was never sparing of the lives of others, would now, to secure his kingdom, rather overact his severity for some months, than, by doing execution but just to the tittle of his account, hazard the escaping of the Messiah.

This execution was sad, cruel, and universal: no abatements made for the dire shriekings of the mothers; no tender-hearted soldier was employed; no hard-hearted person was softened by the weeping eyes and pity-begging looks of those mothers, who wondered how it was possible any person should hurt their pretty sucklings: no connivances there, no protections, or friendships, or consideration, or indulgences; but Herod even suffered his own child, which was at nurse in the coasts of Bethlehem, to bleed to death: which made Augustus Cæsar to say, that "in Herod's house it were better to be a hog than a child;" because the custom of the nation secured a hog from Herod's knife, but no religion could secure his child. The sword, being thus made sharp by Herod's commission, killed fourteen thousand babes, as the Greeks in their calendar, and the Abyssinians of Æthiopia commemorate in their offices of liturgy. For Herod, crafty and malicious, that is, a perfect tyrant, had caused all the children to be gathered together: which the credulous mothers (supposing it had been to take account of their age and number, in order to some taxing) hindered not, but unknowingly suffered themselves and their babes to be betrayed to an irremediable butchery.

"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, Lamentation and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted." All the descriptions of sadness were little enough to express this great weeping, when fourteen thousand mothers in one day saw their babes pouring forth their blood into that bosom whence not long before they had sucked milk; and instead of those smiles which used to entertain the fancy and dear affections of their mothers, nothing was presented to them but affrighting shrieks, and then ghastly looks. The mourning was great, like "the mourning in the valley of Hinnom, and there was no comforter:" their sorrow was too big to be cured, till it should lie down alone, and rest with its own weariness.

Doubtless he, who so privately inquired for Christ, did as secretly contrive this massacre: the mothers were set with their children on their laps, feeding them with the breast, or talking to them in the familiar language of their love, when suddenly the executioner rushes in, and snatches them from their arms, and at once pulling forth his commission and his sword, without regard to shrieks or tears, murders the innocent babe, and leaves the fond mother in a state between madness and death. What cursing of Herod! What wringing of hands! What condoling! What exclaiming was there now in the streets of Bethlehem! But he did not long survive his cruel decree, being swept from his throne by a nauseous disease, to answer for his conduct, at the bar of a tremendous judge.

As soon as the tyrant Herod was cut off from the face of the earth, Joseph was warned by a heavenly messenger, to return to the land of Israel. He obeyed the command, and appears to have had a great desire of residing in Judea, and very probably in Bethlehem; but hearing that Herod was succeeded in his throne by his son Archelaus, and fearing that he might pursue the barbarous design of his father, he directed his course another way; but being warned again by a heavenly message, he retired into Galilee, then under the government of a mild and benevolent prince, called Antipas, and took up his habitation at Nazareth: where the particular circumstances attending the birth of the blessed Jesus were not generally known. The evangelist affirms, that Joseph, with the infant and his mother, resided in Nazareth, where the Holy Jesus spent his youth, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, He shall be called a Nazarene."

Our modern infidels, whose notice the smallest inaccuracy in the sacred scripture has not escaped, have not failed to observe that the evangelist refers to what he cannot justify from any of the prophetic writings, in which are no such words to be found, as "He shall be called a Nazarene." But be it known, that the evangelist may with justice be vindicated from impropriety; by reminding these sceptics, that though the very words are not to be found, the allusion is just, and consequently the application. This expression refers to the general contempt and ridicule, in which the Israelites held the Galileans, and especially the Nazarenes, who were even despised by the Galileans themselves, insomuch that the word Nazarene became a term of reproach among the Jews. Now as the prophets in general foretold the disgrace and infamy, through which the blessed Jesus should pass, they consequently foretold he should be called a Nazarene, or exposed to every token of contempt and ridicule, of which this appellation was a remarkable instance at that time.

Our Lord's residing at Nazareth, wonderfully tended to the fulfilment of those prophecies, because in the course of his public ministry he was frequently reproached with the same, and his countrymen often urged it as a reason for the disregard of his doctrine. But as the stubbornness of unbelief will never admit of conviction, we have therefore added these remarks, to confirm the faith of the christian, rather than convince the obstinate infidel. I shall here, for the instruction of the reader, add a few particulars of the life and death of Herod.

Some suppose that Herod died very soon after Christ was born. Mr. Whiston affirmed that there was only a month between our Lord's nativity and Herod's death. We shall rehearse the principal arguments that are brought against the hypothesis of this learned man, and then give our own opinion, according as the evidence appears.

We must here first collect from Josephus, how long Herod reigned, and in what year he died; and then compare it with the year of our Lord's nativity, as it has been fixed by very learned men. The Jewish historian, speaking of Herod's being declared king of Judea at Rome, has words to this effect: "So he took the kingdom, which he obtained in the 148th olympiad, during the consulate of C. Asinius Pollio, and C. Domitius Calvinus, who was that year the second time consul. This was in the year from the building of the city 714." And the same author, by relating the siege of Jerusalem by Herod, tells us, that it was in the third year after he was declared king at Rome, in the 185th olympiad, M. Agrippa and Canidius Gallus being consuls. He took Jerusalem about the end of the third year of his reign, as M. Le Clerc has proved.

These passages settle the twofold beginning of Herod's reign (from his being proclaimed at Rome, and from his becoming master of Jerusalem) beyond all dispute: let us now see in what

what year he died, which we may also learn from the same historian. He died in the thirty-fourth year of his reign, after he had cut off Antigonus; but the thirty-seventh after his being declared king at Rome. The death of Antigonus was not long after the taking of Jerusalem; for Herod did not think himself safe so long as there was any remainder of the ancient royal family, and therefore never left soliciting Antony, whose prisoner Antigonus was made, till he obtained the death of that unfortunate prince by the hands of a common executioner. This expression, therefore, 'after he had cut off Antigonus,' is much the same as if Josephus had said 'from the taking of Jerusalem.' Now if to the year 713 from the building of Rome, you add thirty-seven, taking in the year 714 in which Herod began to reign, you fall upon the number 750, which was therefore the year of Rome in which Herod died. The same number arises from the addition of thirty-four to 716, at the end of which Antigonus was cut off in favour of Herod, who alone from that time could be called king of the Jews.

Besides this, Josephus marks out another way of finding the true year of Herod's death; for he says there was an eclipse of the moon in that year; which eclipse, according to the calculation of astronomers, happened at Jerusalem on the thirteenth of March in the year 750 from the building of Rome. We shall here omit what has been said about the times of the year at which the reign of Herod began and ended; but only observe in general, that he appears to have died at the beginning of the thirty-seventh year of his reign, which makes it necessary to include the year 714 in calculating the year of his death by the length of his reign, which we have done above.

Having thus settled the year of Herod's death, our next inquiry is, how long the birth of Christ preceded the death of Herod. We have already placed the nativity of our Lord in the thirty-third year of Herod, reckoning from the taking of Jerusalem; and we shall find no reason to alter this, upon the most impartial examination. Concerning the particular number of months, indeed, between the nativity of Christ and the death of Herod, there can be nothing said; but this we may lay down for truth, that Christ was born in the 749th year of Rome; and that is asserted for the two following reasons:

First, St. Luke tells us, that John began to baptize in Jordan in the fifteenth year of Tiberius; and that many flocking to him from all parts, Jesus himself also came and was baptized by him. He adds, that then "Jesus began to be about thirty years of age." The question here is, when Tiberius began to reign; and by finding that, we shall easily know in what year Jesus was born. Now there is a twofold beginning attributed to the reign of this emperor; the first in the eleventh year of the vulgar æra, that is, the fifteenth from the true time of our Lord's nativity, according to the chronology of Usher, when Tiberius was taken in as a colleague by Augustus; and the second about three years after, when Augustus died, and his partner came into the sole possession of the empire. It must be from the first of these beginnings that the evangelist dates the year Tiberius; which falling in with the fifteenth year of our Lord's real age, it follows that some time in the fourteenth year of Tiberius he must be thirty years old. Now this fifteenth year of Tiberius answers to the year of Rome 779, from which subtracting thirty years, it appears that our Lord was born in the year of Rome 749, one year at least before the death of Herod. To prove this, it is necessary to make one remark here, that was before passed over; which is, that Herod died towards the end of the year of Rome 750, which was the beginning of his thirty-seventh; and this agrees with what was before said.

The other mark of the time when our Lord was born, is taken from the gospel of St. John. That evangelist, while he is treating of the first year of our Lord's ministry, introduces the Jews, as saying to Christ, "Forty and six years was this temple in building." By which words they mean, that the temple began to be built forty-six years before, and afterward till that time received continually some additional ornaments, though the main body was finished by Herod in nine years and a half. Thus Pliny, speaking of the temple of Diana at Ephesus, says, it was 220 years in building by all Asia; by which he can mean no more, than that the adorning and beautifying of it was so long carried on. Thus also we might now attribute a very long time to the building of St. Paul's in London, the beautifying of which has been continually carrying on since the outward structure was finished.

Now

Now Josephus tells us, that Herod began to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem in the eighteenth year of his reign, dating the beginning of it from the taking of that city. This eighteenth year of Herod's reign answers partly to the twenty-sixth Julian year, and partly to the twenty-seventh; so that reckoning from the twenty-sixth to the seventy-first of the same æra (which was the twenty-fifth of the vulgar christian æra, the fifteenth of the reign of Tiberius, the first of our Lord's ministry, and the thirtieth of his life), we shall find forty-six whole years, as seems necessary in the present case, without taking notice of the odd months. And if thirty, the year of our Lord's age, be subtracted from seventy-one, the year of the Julian æra at that time, we shall find that he was born in the forty-first year of that same æra, which answers to the 749th from the building of Rome, and the thirty-third of Herod's reign, reckoning from his becoming master of Jerusalem and the death of Antigonus.

They who require a more exact calculation of these times, may find it in such works as are written expressly on the subject: but we believe that what has been here said will be thought sufficient for our purpose, which is only to prove that the birth of our Lord, and the death of Herod, could not happen so near together as some have imagined, and consequently that the time of our Lord's abode in Egypt, from before the slaughter of the innocents till after Herod's death, must have been longer than a few weeks, and even than a very small number of months. If therefore the birth of our Lord was in October, as many have conjectured, and the death of Herod on the 25th of November, as is generally agreed, we must justly conclude that the latter of these was a full year and a month after the former; whence it will follow, that the time of our Lord's abode in Egypt must be about a year; for he was carried thither immediately after his presentation in the temple, and not brought back till Herod was dead.

When Herod had reigned eighteen years, had finished his buildings at Sebaste, and far advanced those at Cæsarea, perceiving himself in full enjoyment of peace and plenty, he formed a design of new-building the temple of Jerusalem, thinking thereby not only to regain the affection of the Jews, but also to erect a monument of honour to his own name. The temple built after the return of the Jews from Babylon, fell much short of that of Solomon in height and magnificence, and other particulars; and five hundred years being elapsed since its erection, several decays happened to it both by length of time, and the injuries of war. For the amending of all these defects and decays, Herod proposed, in a general assembly of the people, his intention of building the whole anew. The people were startled at the proposal, apprehending that when he had pulled down the old temple, he would have no inclination to build it again. But he perceiving this, assured them, that he would not take down the old structure, till he had collected materials ready for immediately erecting a new one; and this in some measure delivered them from their fears. Accordingly he forthwith began the preparations, employing therein a thousand waggons for carrying of stones and timber, ten thousand artificers to fit the work, and a thousand priests, skilled in architecture, to supervise the whole. In two years time the materials were all prepared, and in nine years and a half after that, the new temple was made fit for divine service, though a great number of workmen were still employed about it in the time of our Lord's public ministry. Eighteen thousand of them were discharged at one time, when Gessius Florus was governor of Judea, and mutinies for want of work were the beginning of those seditions which afterwards ended in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the temple with it.

In process of time, Herod, being jealous of two of his sons, had them strangled. The death of these unfortunate princes happened in the year wherein the angel appeared in the temple to Zacharias the father of John the Baptist, as he there officiated in his course. And at the beginning of the next year, about the time that the same angel brought the blessed news of our Lord's conception to the Virgin Mary, a plot of Antipater's against his father was detected, into which he had also drawn Pheroras, the old king's only surviving brother. For the sons of Mariamne being dead, nothing now stood between Antipater and the crown, but the life of Herod, which they had therefore determined to take away by poison. The cause of Pheroras's engaging in this affair, was a quarrel which he had just before had with Herod about a marriage-story; which went so high, that Pheroras was forbidden the court. He
therefore

therefore returned to his own tetrarchy; and Antipater got himself called to Rome, that they both might be out of the way when the plot was executed. The poison was procured by Pheroras, who gave it to his wife to lay up till there should be an opportunity of getting it administered to Herod. But Pheroras falling sick, and dying immediately after, his wife confessed the whole design, which was also made out by other clear evidence. Herod now saw too late the wickedness of Antipater, and was convinced that he had procured the death of his brothers with the same view that he had designed that of his father. It was but justice that such a wretch should suffer; and it so happened, that the discovery was not communicated to him at Rome, or on the way back, time enough to prevent his returning into Herod's power. The birth of our Lord happened during this absence of Antipater, and was immediately followed by the arrival of the wise men, and the death of the innocents, of all which particulars we have already treated. In fine, Antipater being returned from Rome into Judæa, was there convicted for treasonable designs against his father before Quintilius Varus, president of Syria, and sentence of condemnation passed upon him, which sentence being confirmed by Augustus, Antipater was laid up in prison and afterwards put to death.

When Herod fell sick, he declared his youngest son his successor. He gave in legacies, a thousand talents to Cæsar; to his wife Julia, his children, friends, and freemen, five hundred talents more. The rest of his money, with his lands and revenues, he gave to his sons and grandchildren; with respect to his sister Salome, he bequeathed her a very considerable fortune, in acknowledgment of the steadiness of her affection to him. He was now in the seventieth year of his age; and his illness increased upon him, past all hopes of recovery: he became choleric and furious as a madman; and so mischievously cross-grained, that there was no possibility of pleasing him. The thing that troubled him arose from the haughtiness of his mind, upon a supposition that he was fallen into the contempt and hatred of the people, even to the degree of their taking pleasure in his misery; besides that, he was further confirmed in this opinion by a commotion that soon after followed upon it, at the instance and instigation of some popular men that headed the sedition. The thing was this:

There were two men that were in high reputation among the Jews, not only for their eminent learning in general, but likewise for their particular skill and excellence in the law. And they had yet further endeared themselves to the people by the exceeding great care and pains they took in training up their children to the knowledge and practice of their duty and profession, which they made the main business of their lives; their names were Judas the son of Sariphæus, and Matthias the son of Margalothus.

It was no sooner come to their ears that the king was given over, than they presently put it into the heads of the young men to set up a reformation, and to destroy all those new works and structures which the king had erected, contrary to the laws of their country; giving them all assurance, that if they shewed themselves champions for the truth, they should not fail of their reward. They bade them moreover consider, that all the broils and factions of the king's family, and the desperate condition of the king's sickness, were only divine judgments upon him for his innovations, which Judas and Matthias zealously insisted on.

There was, among other instances of a superstitious magnificence, a golden eagle of a prodigious weight and value, dedicated and set up over the portal of the temple. Now this being a flat contradiction to the Jewish laws, which absolutely forbade the use and ornament of images in such cases, these doctors set their disciples at work to pluck down the eagle. 'It would be an hazardous enterprize (they told them), but nevertheless a glorious death was much more eligible than a life of pleasure; and that their blood could not be better shed than in vindicating the laws and rights of their country, which would also make their names immortal; whereas otherwise the brave and the mean would lie undistinguished in the same common fate; wherefore all men of honour and virtue would do well to improve the irreversible necessity of death,

by a right choice of the most glorious occasion for it; and so to quit the troublesome world with comfort. It takes away, they added, the sting and terror of mortality itself both at once, to die in the conscience of an honest action, and of a good life; and to transmit both the fame and the reward of it to those who shall come after you.'

Soon after this harangue, a rumour was propagated that the king was dead; so that, betwixt the discourse and the report, the people were so inflamed to be upon action, that they mounted the portal at noon-day; tore down the eagle, and hacked it to pieces with their axes, in the sight of a vast multitude of spectators in the temple. The king's commander in chief, immediately upon the news of this uproar, hastened away to the tumult, with a strong body of troops, to prevent farther mischief; suspecting the matter, in truth, to be much more considerable than he found it: for coming to the place, there was no enemy to be seen, but a rude undisciplined rabble, without either order or arms, who were easily broken and scattered upon the first charge; only about forty of them, with their leaders Judas and Matthias, stood their ground, upon a point of honour not to turn their backs. These were all taken, and carried prisoners to the king; who put it to them, how they durst presume to lay violent hands upon that sacred figure. Their answer was, 'That they had thought of it a long time, and coming at last to a resolution, they did as became men of honesty and courage, in putting it in execution; and that what they had now done was only in vindication of the honour of God, and of the precepts of their great Master, whose disciples they profess themselves to be; beseeching Herod not to make it a matter of wonder, if they preferred the laws that they had received from Moses, and he from God himself, before any other decrees whatsoever. They did not suffer (they said) for evil doing, but for conscience and duty; and that they were ready to deliver up their bodies in this cause, either to punishment, or to death.' It was clear that their tongues and their hearts went together in all that they said and did; and they were now ready to suffer with the same constancy they acted with before.

The king, after this, sent them bound to Jericho, where he called a council of the Jews, and was himself (being sick and weakly) carried in his chair into the assembly; where he gave them to understand what unwearied pains and labours he had undergone for the service of the commonwealth; his rebuilding their temple at an immense charge: a work that the whole race of the Asmonean family had not been able to compass in a hundred and twenty-five years: setting forth also, that he had not only re-edified the fabric, but beautified, endowed, and enriched it with ornaments, presents, and donatives, worthy of so magnificent an undertaking. 'And now, (says he) in the conclusion, when I thought myself sure of surviving my own funerals in the fame of a happy memory, and an everlasting glory for the good offices I have done, here am I treated with contempt whilst living, and paid with indignities for all my benefits and respects; affronted in the face of the sun and of the people; my gifts and oblations torn from the very temple, and an act of malice improved into a sacrilege; for the injury is to God, not to me.' The leading men of the council, not knowing how far Herod's cruelty might transport him, thought it their safest course to purge themselves, by way of prevention; which they did, by declaring not only their innocence of the fact, but their opinion also, that the rioters deserved to be severely punished for it. These words sweetened him toward all the rest.

Herod took away the high-priesthood from Matthias, upon a presumption that he was no stranger to the contrivance, and gave it to Jozar his brother-in-law. After having deprived Matthias of the pontificate, he gave order for burning alive the other Matthias, the ring-leader of the sedition, and all his companions with him. The moon, as it fell out, was that night in an eclipse.

Herod grew every day worse and worse, and his disease looked like a judicial punishment for his wickedness. He was parched up with a faint inward fever, that almost burnt his heart out, and yet scarce sensible to the touch. He was tormented with an insatiable dog-appetite; ulcers and cholics in his bowels; phlegmatic tumors in his feet and groin; his privy parts putrifying and crawling with worms; a noisome and painful tentigo; asthma,

asthmas, cramps, and contractions of the nerves : all men, in short, of religion, philosophy, or observation, were of opinion that the hand of God was evidently upon Herod in this visitation. But still, in the hopeless extremity of this his intolerable as well as incurable misery, he himself was the only man that did not despair, but continued seeking out every where for physicians and remedies. He went over the river Jordan himself to the hot baths at Callirrhoe, that empty themselves into the lake of Asphaltitis. These waters, beside their mineral virtue, are no unpleasant drink. Upon his coming hither, his physicians ordered him to be set up to the shoulders in a vessel of oil, which put him into such a fit of fainting, that his domestics, giving him up for dead, broke out into lamentations and outcries, which brought him to himself again.

By this time he found all his flattering hopes of life to be vain and idle ; and therefore appointed a donative of fifty * drachmas a man to be distributed among the soldiers ; large sums among his friends and officers, and so he returned to Jericho ; where the evil humour so far prevailed upon him, that he imparted to them his final resolution ; one of the horridest perhaps that ever entered into the heart of man to imagine. It was this : he sent out a summons to all the eminent Jews of the country, to repair immediately to him at Jericho, and not to fail, on pain of death. Upon their appearance, according to the proclamation, they were all shut up in the Circus, or Tilt-yard, one with another, whether guilty or innocent. He sent, in the next place, for his sister Salome, and Alexas her husband, and spoke to them to the following effect : ' My time (says he) is drawing on : I am oppressed with pains ; and flesh and blood must yield to fate ; which is no more than the common lot of mankind. It would be troublesome, I must confess, to think of wanting any of the funeral honours that belong to crowned heads. I know very well what sort of treatment I am to expect from the Jews. They hated me in my life-time, and they'll be glad to see me dead ; but it lies in the power of you two to give me some ease yet, even at my last gasp ; and it is no more than what you owe me too. Do but follow my counsel, and I dare yet promise myself the most honourable funeral solemnity that ever any prince had under the sun ; the most to the joy of my soul ; and, for a conclusion, an universal mourning, without one single tear of hypocrisy or affectation. Wherefore, so soon as ever the breath is out of my body, let the Circus be surrounded with soldiers, and the word of command given to destroy every man within the inclosure : but not a syllable of my death till the work be done. In the due execution of this order, you will lay a double obligation upon me ; one in the performance of my will, the other in the celebration of my death, with the honour of a public mourning.' He accompanied these words with tears and lamentations, adjuring his relations, by all that was sacred in human faith, consanguinity, and friendship, to be true to him in the punctual discharge of all he had committed to their trust ; which they promised to make good to him in every particular.

Perhaps some persons may suggest, that in the history of this bloody monster's barbarities to his nearest relations in time past, there might be dangerous jealousies and competitions ; and consequently a kind of necessity upon him to be cruel in his own defence : but in this last action of his, he has laid himself open, even in his own natural colours, for the veriest brute that ever wore the shape of a reasonable creature. When he could live no longer himself, he bequeathed destruction to those he left behind him, and took care to make the whole nation mourners for him, by the order he left for the destroying of one at least out of every family ; and all this too without any injury, provocation, exception, or so much as any reason given for doing it : whereas, among people that have but the least spark of humanity or religion, death puts an end to all controversies, and reconciles even the greatest enemies to each other.

* An Hebrew drachma was of the same weight with the Grecian and the Roman, and weighed two penny-weights six grains three fourths ; and its value in silver amounted to sixpence three farthings and three eighths ; fifty, therefore, must amount to about one pound nine shillings of our money.

Just as Herod was giving his last orders to his kindred, his embassadors brought him an answer from Cæsar to the letters they carried to Rome. The substance of it was briefly this: 'That Augustus had put Acme to death for a correspondence with Antipater; and that he left Antipater himself to the king his father, either to be put to death or banished, according to his discretion.' This news gave Herod some satisfaction and respect, to find himself both revenged upon Acme, and at liberty to do with his son what he pleased; but he relapsed quickly again into his pains; and in an outrageous fit of greediness and hunger, he called for a knife and an apple, it being usual with him to pare his own apples, and so eat them little by little. He was observed to look suspiciously about him, as if he had some thought of stabbing himself; but his nephew Achiab kept his eye upon him, and in the very instant of the attempt caught hold of his uncle's right-hand with an outcry, and prevented it. This noise put the court a second time into an uproar, all people taking it for granted that the king was just then expiring.

Antipater took all for granted; and making no doubt at all but his father was dead, he made as little also of procuring his liberty, upon this occasion, and by that means clearing his way to the throne. In this confidence, he treated with his keeper about his discharge; with large offers and promises, both of rewards at present, and of future preferments, when he should come to the crown; but the keeper was so far from complying with his proposals, that he went and discovered the whole practice to the king, who hated him sufficiently before: but this story of the keeper's put him into so extravagant a passion, that he started up, though in the very agonies of death, and bursting out into violent outrages upon himself, both in actions and exclamations, he commanded one of his guards in that very moment to go and kill him, and ordered his body to be buried privately in the castle of Hyrcania.

Upon changing his mind, Herod changed his will also, and made Antipas, whom he had designed by his former testament for successor to the government, tetrarch of Galilee and Petrea; but gave the kingdom to Archelaus; the provinces of Trachon and Gaulon, Batanea and Panias, to his son Philip, under the title of a tetrarchy. Jamnia, Azotus, and Phasaelis, he gave to his sister Salome, with fifty thousand pieces of minted money, not forgetting his other relations also, either in land or cash. He left Cæsar, beside gold and silver plate, and rich furniture of all sorts, ten millions of pieces in ready coin; and to the empress Julia, with her friends, five millions more of the same. Matters being thus settled, Herod departed this life five days after the death of Antipater, four and thirty years after the expulsion of Antigonos, and in the thirty-seventh year from his being declared by the Romans king of the Jews.

After Herod's death, Salome and Alexas went directly to the nobility that were shut up in the Circus, telling them, in the king's name, that they might go home, and follow their own business, for there was no farther occasion for them. This contrivance laid upon the Jews the highest obligation imaginable. It was now a proper time to make publication of the king's death; and the soldiery being summoned to meet at the amphitheatre at Jericho, Herod's letters to the army were there read; full of gracious acknowledgments of their past faith and services, and desiring them to continue the same dutiful affection to his son Archelaus for the future, whom he had now declared his successor. Ptolemy, the keeper of the king's seal, read, after this, the testament itself, with this conditional clause in it express, 'that the act itself was to be reputed to be of no force, without the consent of Cæsar.' This was followed with acclamations of 'God save king Archelaus!' and wishes of a happy reign to him, both from officers and soldiers, with promises of the same fidelity to the new king that they had paid to his predecessor Herod.

CHAPTER III.

STATE OF THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS, AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE TRANSACTIONS OF HIS PRIVATE LIFE. HIS DISPUTATION WITH THE LEARNED JEWISH DOCTORS. MISSION, DOCTRINE, AND CHARACTER OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. CHRIST'S BAPTISM, AND VISIBLE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ON THAT SOLEMN OCCASION.

FROM the return of Joseph and Mary out of Egypt to Judæa, and their habitation in Nazareth, till the blessed child Jesus was twelve years of age, we have nothing transmitted to us out of any authentic record, but that they went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover; which opportunities of religion, and public address to God in the rites of festivals and solemnities of the temple, they had been denied during their peregrination in Egypt: but being returned to their own country, they again enjoy the blessings of those holy societies and employments, of which they had been so long deprived.

At the feast, therefore, of the passover, when Jesus was twelve years old, and was in the holy city, attending upon the paschal rites and solemn sacrifices of the law, his parents, having fulfilled their days of festivity, went homeward, supposing the child had been in the caravan among his friends, and so they travelled for the space of a whole day's journey: but when they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, and found him not, they returned to Jerusalem full of fear and sorrow. Who can express the uneasy apprehensions and sad tremblings of heart which then thronged about the holy virgin mother, who was in pain not only for the loss of the joy of her family, but the hopes of all the world! What did not uneasy care at that time suggest to her upon the apprehension of a loss so vastly considerable! Possibly an angel might have carried him she knew not whither; or it may be the son of Herod might have gotten the prey which his cruel father had missed. After having spent some time under these anxieties of mind in her sad and holy pursuit of her lost jewel, despairing of the prosperous event of any human diligence, she made her address to God, the only relief and succour of distressed minds; and entering into the temple to pray, God, who knew her desires, prevented her with the blessings of his goodness, and her sorrow was changed into joy and wonder: for there she * found her holy Son sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing and asking them questions.

The bare sight of him soon obliterates their care and grief: but the glad parents receive this addition to their joy, they find him illustrated with a miracle; for when they saw him, they were amazed, and so were all that heard him, at his understanding and answers, beyond his education and experience, beyond his years, and even the common abilities and capacities of the wisest men, discoursing and disputing with the learned.

The parents of Christ went up yearly to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover; the law was only for the males: I do not find the blessed virgin bound to this voyage, the weaker sex received indulgence from God: yet she knowing the spiritual profit of that journey, takes pains voluntarily to travel that long way every year; piety regards not any distinction of sexes or degrees, neither yet doth God's acceptance; it rather pleases the mercy of the highest more to reward that service, which, though he approves in all, yet out of favour he will not impose upon all. It could not be but that she whom the Holy Ghost overshadowed, should be zealous of God's service: they who will go no further than they are dragged in their religious exercises, are no whit of kin to her whom all nations shall call blessed.

It was the fashion of those times and places, that they went up, and so returned by troops, to and from those set meetings of their holy festivals. The whole parish of Nazareth went and

* The words in the text are, "after three days they found him;" but we need not from thence infer, that they were three days in seeking him, but rather, that it was three days from the time they set out from Jerusalem; going on their journey the first day; returning to Jerusalem the second; and finding him in the temple on the third: for, since they found him in the temple, which in all probability was the first place they sought for him in, we can hardly imagine that they should be three days in Jerusalem, before they found him.

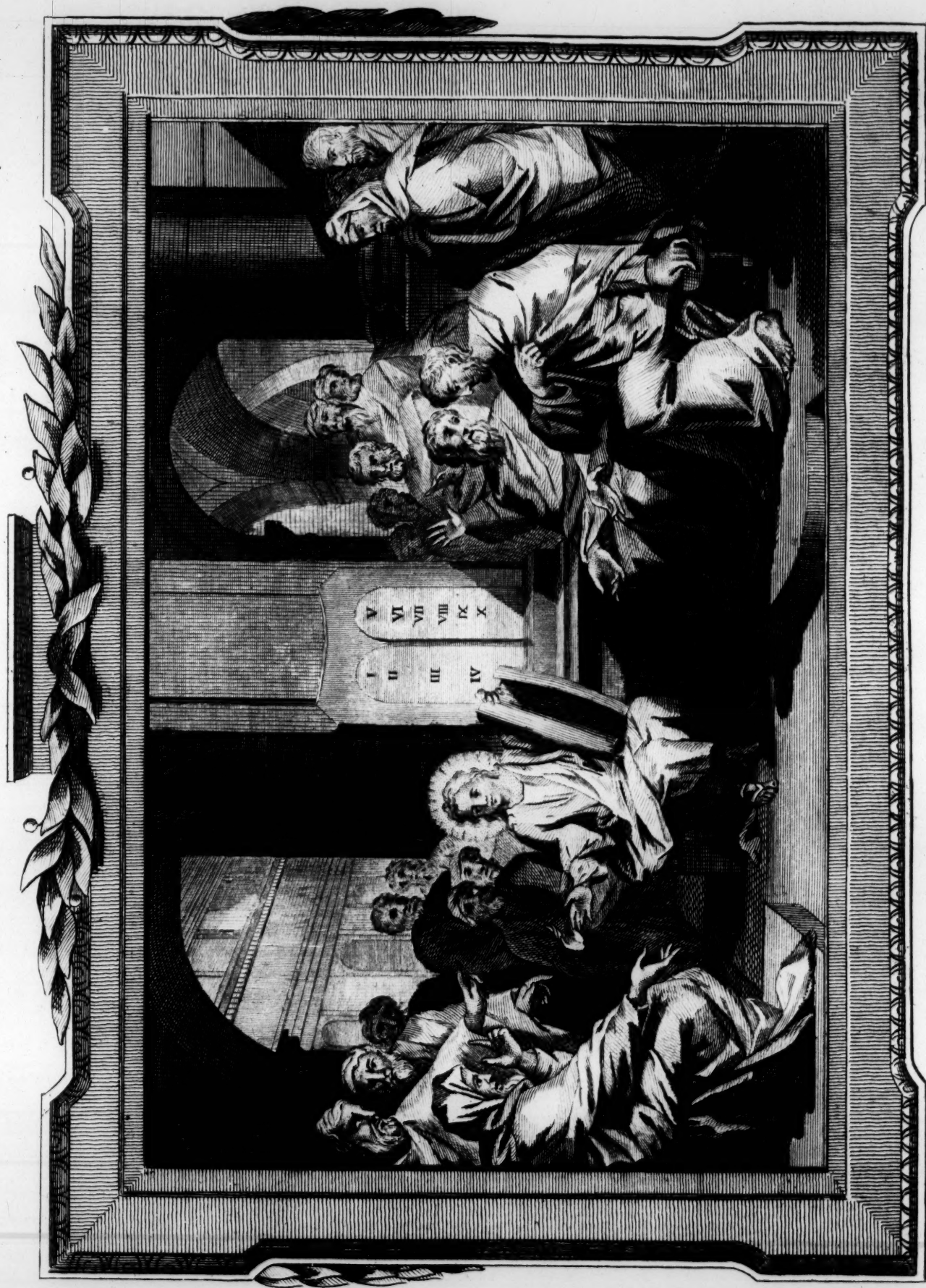
came together. Good fellowship proves in nothing so sweet, as in the passage to heaven: much comfort is added by society to that journey, which of itself is pleasant; it is to the devout soul a welcome word, "Come, let us go up to the house of our Lord." Mutual encouragement is none of the least benefits of our holy assemblies: many sticks laid together make a good fire, which, if they lie single, lose both their light and heat.

The feast ended, what should they do but return to Nazareth? God's services may not be so attended, as that we should neglect our particular callings: Himself calls us from his own house to ours, and takes pleasure in seeing that while we are not slothful in business, we are fervent in spirit: piety and diligence must keep meet changes with each other; neither doth God less accept of our return to Nazareth, than our going up to Jerusalem.

The doctors were not more amazed to hear so intelligent a childhood, than the parents of Christ were to see him among the doctors; the joy of finding him was equal to the astonishment of finding him thus: and now, not Joseph (he knew how little right he had to that divine Son), but Mary, breaks forth into a loving expostulation, "Son, why hast thou so dealt with us?" that she might not seem to take upon her as an imperious mother: it is probable she reserved this question till she saw him alone; inasmuch as she meant rather to express grief than reproof. Jesus replies, "How is it that ye sought me? Know ye not that I must go about my Father's business?" Immediately before the blessed virgin had said, "Thy father and I sought thee with heavy hearts;" where in both, according to the supposition of the word, she called Joseph the father of Christ, and according to the method of a dutiful wife, she names her Joseph before herself. She well knew that Joseph had nothing but a name in this business: she knew how God had dignified her beyond him, yet she says, "Thy father and I sought thee." The Son of God stands not upon contradiction to his mother; but leading her thoughts from his supposed father to his true, from earth to heaven, he answers, "Knew ye not that I must go about my Father's business?"

In vain is Christ sought among his kindred, according to the flesh: so far are they still from giving us their aid to find the true Messiah, that they lead us from him: back again therefore are Joseph and Mary gone to seek him at Jerusalem: she goes about in the city, by the streets and by the open places, and "seeks him whom her soul loveth: she sought him for the time, and found him not." Do we think she spared her search? The evening of her return, she hastens to the inn, where she had left him, where missing him, she inquires of every one she met, "Have you not seen him, whom my soul loveth?" At last, on the third day, she finds him in the temple: one day was spent in the journey towards Galilee; another in the return to Jerusalem: the third day recovers him: He, who would rise again the third day, and be found amongst the living, now also would the third day be found of his parents, after their great sorrow for his absence. In vain shall ye hope to find Christ in the streets, in the taverns, in the theatres: seek him in his holy temple: seek him with piety, seek him with faith, there shall ye meet him, there shall ye recover him. While children of that age were playing in the streets, Christ was found sitting in the temple, not to gaze on the outward glory of that house, or on the golden candlesticks or tables, but to hear and oppose the doctors; He, who as God gave them all the wisdom they had, as the Son of Man hearkens to the wisdom he had given them.

However, being thus happily found by his parents, he returned with them to Nazareth, and was subject to them, where he lived in all holiness and humility, submitting to an employment or trade, which he undertook in obedience to his supposed father, and for the support of that holy family, which was dear in the eyes of God, though not splendid in the opulence of a free and ample fortune. He wrought in the trade of a Carpenter; and when Joseph died, which happened before the manifestation of Jesus unto Israel, he wrought alone, and was no more called the Carpenter's Son, but the Carpenter. "Is not this the Carpenter, the son of Mary?" said his offended countrymen, Mark vi. 3. And in this condition did the blessed Jesus abide till he was thirty years old; for he that came to fulfil the law, would not suffer one tittle of it to pass unaccomplished:



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CHRIST questioneth in the Temple with the DOCTORS.



complished : since by the law of the nation, and custom of the religion, no priest was to officiate, or prophet to preach, before he was thirty years of age.

It may possibly be made a question, why the Evangelists have given us no account of our Saviour's life, from the twelfth year of his age till he began his ministry, which (according to the vulgar æra) was about the thirtieth ; because if, in this intermediate space, he did any thing worthy of remembrance, it ought, some may say, in all reason, to have been recorded. But, when it is considered that the end of the sacred penmen was, not so much to gratify our curiosity, as to consult our profit, we cannot but admire the great wisdom of God (by whose inspiration they wrote) in passing by the less active parts of our Lord's life, which would certainly have swelled their gospels to immense volumes, fit for the perusal of none but the studious, and such as had plenty of time at their command ; whereas now, taking the four gospels together, they make but a small book, and, separately, no more than little manuals, that may be carried about with us where-ever we go ; may be soon read over, and easily remembered, even by men of mean capacities and no great leisure : and yet they contain all the transactions of our Saviour's life, which we are chiefly concerned to know.

As this is the whole account we could collect from sacred history, concerning the childhood and private life of the blessed Jesus, the Saviour of mankind, we must content ourselves therewith, not seeking to indulge a curiosity which such silence seems to forbid as sinful, as well as impertinent.

During the obscure state of our blessed Redeemer at Nazareth, the emperor Augustus died, in Campania, after a long reign of near forty years, to the general regret of the whole Roman empire, and was succeeded by Tiberius his step-son, a prince of a very different temper of mind from his predecessor. This emperor, in the second year of his reign, recalled Rufus from the government of Judæa, and sent Valerius Gracchus to succeed him. After a government of eleven years, Gracchus was recalled, and succeeded by Pontius Pilate, a person resembling, in disposition, his master Tiberius, who was malicious, cruel, and covetous.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TIME AND MANNER OF JOHN'S PREACHING. THE EXCELLENCE OF THE GOSPEL ABOVE THE LAW. THE BEGINNING OF CHRIST'S MINISTRY. CHRIST'S GOING INTO THE WILDERNESS TO BE TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL. CALLING OF SEVERAL OF THE DISCIPLES. THE MARRIAGE IN CANA. DRIVING THE BUYERS AND SELLERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE. NICODEMUS COMES TO CHRIST. JOHN'S REPROVING OF HEROD. CHRIST AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN AT THE WELL. JESUS COMES INTO NAZARETH. RULER'S DAUGHTER HEALED. CHRIST LEAVES NAZARETH, AND GOES TO RESIDE AT CAPERNAUM. AN ACCOUNT OF SYNAGOGUE WORSHIP.

THE beginning of John's public ministry was in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, commonly reckoned the third emperor of Rome. Pontius Pilate was at that time the Roman governor of Judæa, with the title of procurator ; Herod Antipas was tetrarch of Galilee, which dignity he had enjoyed twenty-eight years ; his brother Philip being also tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias of Abilene. The dignity of the high-priesthood was then vested in Annas and Caiaphas, who executed that office jointly. And this was the blessed season appointed by God, predicted by the prophets, and expected by all the faithful, in which life and immortality were to be brought to light through the gospel ; for which reason St. Mark emphatically calls the time of John's baptism the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Some have conjectured that John had this commission given him in the month of September, about the feast of trumpets, which was the beginning of the civil year of the Jews ; and also that the year which then commenced was a year of jubilee, when there was always a great concourse of people who came from foreign parts into Judæa ; agreeable

agreeable to the prophecy of Ifaiah, which, among other characters of John's ministry, calls it a proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord. But we do not find all this ascertained by chronologers in general; for, according to the vulgar computation, the time was about Midsummer. Bishop Usher, and his followers, are thought to have been the most exact of any in this particular: they agree with those who fix the beginning of John's ministry to the proclamation of a jubilee, but change the month from September to October. The preaching of John, say they, commenced on the tenth day of the seventh month, five days before the feast of tabernacles, upon the great day of expiation, when the high-priest entered into the Holy of holies. This was a penitential day, and joined with so solemn a fast, that whosoever did not afflict his soul thereon, was to be cut off from among the people. It answered to the nineteenth of our October, and was likewise the day whereon, by a solemn sounding of trumpets, the thirtieth jubilee of the Jews, and the last that ever they saw, was proclaimed. Which season, as one remarks, agrees with the nature and freedom of the gospel, of which the jubilee was a type.

The Baptist had till this time lived in the wilderness under the discipline of the Holy Ghost and the tuition of angels, in conversation with God, and under great mortification to the world. His cloathing, according to the manner of the ancient prophets, was a rough garment of camel's hair, girt about him with a leathern girdle; and his food was plain, necessary without variety, for the most part only locusts and wild honey. This retired, cheap, and abstemious way of living, gave him the best opportunities for prayer and meditation, and the exercise of all holy duties, till his bodily affections were absolutely subdued; and he was in no danger of being corrupted by the temptations, or daunted by the frowns, of the world: so that now, in the thirtieth year of his age, he was perfectly well qualified to enter upon the actual administration of his office. This was also the age at which the priests and Levites, of whose number the Baptist was one, were permitted by the law to begin the exercise of their functions. And now the word of the Lord came to John in the wilderness, commanding him to go to the Jews, and declare to them the necessity of a reformation and a holy life, inasmuch as the kingdom of the Messiah was at hand.

John did not upon this immediately come forth to Jerusalem, or the other cities of Judæa, but into the country about Jordan, which was convenient for his purpose. Here it was that the Israelites found that passage through the river which was typical of baptism, when they came out of Egypt; and by the same way they were afterwards carried captive into Babylon, it being the high-road from Judæa into the east. Near that place also Elias, that eminent type of John, after passing over this Jordan, was taken up in a fiery chariot. What could be more remarkable than that the Baptist, who was the Elias (Elijah) spoken of by Malachi, should first discover the spirit of that great and ancient prophet, near the spot where he had dropt his mantle for his servant and successor Elisha? here he began to proclaim the near approach of the Messiah: and in order to prepare his nation for the reception of so great and holy a prince, he exhorted them to confession and repentance of their sins, and a speedy reformation of their lives; for that now the Lord was coming with his fan in his hand, and would thoroughly purge his floor, gathering the wheat into his own garner, but burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

The fame of this new preacher extended itself over all the country; and the doctrine which he taught and inculcated was so conformable to right reason, and the evidence of its truth so clear and powerful, that a prodigious concourse of people resorted to him, from Jerusalem, and from all the other parts of Judea, and even from Galilee. These being deeply affected with his discourses, and dreading the punishments which God would shortly inflict on the unbelievers, began to acknowledge their crimes, that had made them justly incur the divine displeasure; and, professing their repentance for what was past, and their resolutions to live for the future in a stricter conformity to God's law, in order to evidence their sincerity, they submitted themselves to be baptized by him in the river Jordan. John was now acknowledged by all men as a prophet, and became the oracle of people of all professions. The publicans, the soldiers, and those who were esteemed the greatest of sinners, thronged to hear his sermons of repentance, and take directions of amendment

from

from his own mouth. Nay, so universal was his reputation, that we read of some brethren at Ephesus, and of Apollos of Alexandria, who had received the baptism of John; which proves that he was resorted to from foreign countries, and that this dawn of the Sun of righteousness was seen beyond the limits of Palestine.

Among the great numbers of people that came from all parts to hear him, there appeared not a few of the Sadducees and Pharisees: whether out of pure curiosity, or from some other reason is not recorded. The former of these sects denied that there is any life after this; and the latter, though they professed to believe a future state, had seldom much true religion, but for the most part imposed upon the people under a formal shew of piety. As soon as John beheld these among his auditors, being acquainted with their inward hypocrisy, instead of shewing them that respect which they commonly received from the vulgar, he addressed himself to them in a very sharp invective before all the people present; as knowing this, if any, to be the proper way to effect their cure. The sense of what he then delivered to them may be thus expressed: "O you, whose vitiated nature may be justly compared to the deadly poison of vipers; you are quite mistaken, if you think to escape God's vengeance by a mere outside washing only, without an amendment of your lives."

His hearers then demanded of him what they should do to avoid those terrible judgments with which he threatened their nation? To which he answered, "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that has none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise:" thus recommending above all things an extensive charity, and the retrenching of their superfluous expences, that they might have wherewithal to contribute more liberally to the support of the needy. Then the Jewish tax-gatherers, a covetous, griping, unjust sort of men, came likewise to his baptism, and demanded of him what they also were to do. These he answered by telling them, that they ought not to exact any thing beyond what the edicts of magistracy gave them power to collect. After these came the soldiers also, that is, such persons in the army as were addicted to the Jewish religion, and inquired of him, which were the principal vices to be avoided by persons of their profession? he told them, that they ought to do no manner of injustice, neither by open violence, nor by secret fraud, but be content with the pay allotted them by the government, and out of it provide themselves necessities for their daily subsistence. Thus did this excellent person suit his admonitions to all ranks and degrees of men, being taught by the Holy Spirit, without ever conversing in the world, what was the most grievous weight in every circumstance of life, and the sin that did most easily beset the professors of every occupation. Such an instructor as this could not but command veneration.

This course of honest and salutary doctrine, delivered with the greatest zeal and vehemence of expression, and accompanied with the clearest innocence of manners and most becoming gravity of behaviour, so far prevailed upon the people, that they would willingly have persuaded themselves that John was actually the Messiah. But to prevent them from running into this error, he freely declared that he only baptized them with water to repentance; but that one was coming after him who should baptise them with the Holy Ghost and with fire; a person so far exceeding himself in dignity and power, that he was not worthy to serve him in the meanest offices, such as bearing or unloosing his shoes. Here, as our blessed Lord afterwards intimated, was an end of the law and the prophets, that is, of all that part of the Mosaic dispensation, which was of a positive nature only, and of that distant prophetic relation which the writers of the old testament had to the Messiah, to whom John now pointed as to a person present in the world, and shortly to make his public appearance. And from this time the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent took it by force. Multitudes of gentiles, publicans, soldiers, harlots, and others the most unpromising of mankind, flocked to the ministry and baptism of John, believed in the approaching Messiah, and by their importunate zeal, like violent invaders, snatched the kingdom from the scribes, Pharisees, and heads of the nation to whom it was first offered.

There are several things observable in the doctrine and conversation of John, which gave him such a commanding influence over the minds of his hearers; some of which

might well be imitated by the preachers of our days. He reprov'd the miscarriages of all orders of men, with impartial freedom and authority; the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, the profaneness of the Sadducees, the extortion of the publicans, the rapine of the soldiers; and the lewdness and incest of Herod himself, as we shall find hereafter. On the other hand, he enforced his exhortations to repentance by a lively representation of that approaching happiness to which true penitents should certainly be admitted. "Repent," says he, "for the kingdom of God is at hand." But the most effectual means whereby this prophet of the Highest prepared the way of the Lord, was peculiar to himself, and consisted in setting the Messiah before the eyes of the people, and convincing them that the Son of God was manifested in the flesh. The coming of Christ had been always understood as such a great and general blessing to mankind, that he was styled the hope of Israel, and the desire of all nations. His presence had been longed for by many generations; even prophets and kings had desired to see him, though it were but for one day. And therefore his immediate forerunner, who prophesied not of him at a distance, but brought him as it were by the hand to view, and introduced him to his office before all the people, must needs have been very acceptable to all those who had just and true notions of their Redeemer. The people were so charmed with John's doctrine and conversation, that they thought no honour too great for him. Here was a strong temptation to pride and vanity, which might have had an ill effect on some ambitious minds; but it had no other on him, than only to render his humility the more conspicuous. This is an excellent lesson for ministers, who are apt to forget that unaffected simplicity with which the gospel was first planted, and by which alone it can be successfully recommended.

The evangelical state being thus proclaimed and ushered in by the preaching and ministry of the Baptist, our Lord appeared next more fully to publish and confirm it. His public life, his death, and resurrection, the doctrine he delivered, the persons he deputed to preach and convey it to the world, the success that accompanied the ministry of the apostles, and whatever else belongs to the gospel history, will be largely treated of in the remaining parts of this work. What we have further to do at the present, agreeably to the contents of this chapter, is to consider the excellence of the gospel dispensation, above that of the law.

The scripture frequently takes notice of the advantage which this new revelation had over the covenant of works introduced by Moses; and for this reason Jesus Christ is said, by the apostle to be the Mediator of a better covenant, notwithstanding the Mosaical dispensation is often magnified in the Old Testament, and is still passionately admired and adhered to by the descendents of Abraham. This advantage consists in several particulars, besides the infinite difference between the persons employed to introduce and settle them. Moses, though faithful in all his house, was yet but a servant; and Jesus Christ, our Lord, being the eternal Son of God, and heir of all things, was ruler over his own house, and worthy of more honour than Moses. Let us remark some of the most considerable instances in which this pre-eminence of the gospel appears.

First, In its perspicuity and perfection. The Mosaical dispensation was almost wholly made up of types and shadows: the evangelical has brought to light the truth and substance of them all. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Their ordinances were but shadows of good things to come, sensible representations of what was to follow after; the body is Christ, the perfection and accomplishment of their whole ritual administration. The land of Canaan typified heaven; Moses and Joshua were types of the blessed Jesus; the Israelites after the flesh were the image of the true Israel, which is after the spirit: and all their expiatory sacrifices did but represent that great sacrifice whereby Christ offered up himself, and by his own blood purged away the sins of mankind; in a word, the most minute and inconsiderable circumstances of the legal œconomy were intended as little lights, that might gradually usher in the state of the gospel. A curious artist, who designs an excellent piece of painting, is not accustomed to complete and finish it all at once; but first with his pencil to draw some rude lines and rough draughts, then to add the dead colouring, and to that perhaps several other

other heightenings, before he puts his last hand to the work. By such a method as this, the all-wise God seems to have delivered the revelation of his Son to mankind: the first draughts and ideas were introduced by Moses; to these the prophets under the old dispensation added many clear and express characters; at last, the substance or perfection of the whole was brought in by Christ himself. And how admirably did God herein condescend to the temper and humour of the Jewish nation! for they being as it were in an undisciplined and childish state, apt to be taken with gaudy and sensible objects, by the external and pompous institutions of the ceremonial dispensation he prepared them for better things, as children are brought on by things accommodated to their weak capacities. The church was then an heir under age, to be trained up in such a way as agreed best with its infant-temper, till it came to be of a more ripe and manly age, able to digest evangelical mysteries, and then the cover and veil were taken off, in order that things might appear in their own proper form.

But, in the second place, our happiness above that of the Jews appears in this, that we are redeemed from those many severe and burdensome impositions to which they were then yoked, and are now obliged only to an easy and rational service.

Thirdly, The dispensation of the gospel is infinitely preferable to that of the law, on account of its being founded upon more noble and excellent promises, "It is a better covenant, established upon better promises;" and that both for their nature and the clearness of their revelation. They are of a more sublime and excellent nature, as being promises of spiritual and eternal things, such as immediately concern the perfection and happiness of mankind, grace, peace, pardon, and eternal life. Nor are these spiritual blessings better in themselves, than they are clear and certain in their discovery to us. Whatever of this kind was proposed under their former state, was obscure and dark, and very few of the people could understand it: but to us the veil is taken off, and we behold the glory of the Lord with open face, especially in the things that relate to another world, "For this is the promise he hath given us, even eternal life." Hence our Lord is said to have "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." The happiness of another world was a notion among the heathens; but it was not firmly agreed upon, or received. Among some of the Jews it was peremptorily denied, namely, by those who were called Sadducees, a considerable sect in that church; which we can hardly suppose would have been the case, had it been clearly propounded in the law of Moses. And among the heathens, the most sober and considerate persons did sometimes at least doubt of it; witness that remarkable confession of Socrates himself, the wisest and best man that ever lived in the heathen world, who, having pleaded his cause before his judges, and bravely discoursed of the happy state of good men in the other life, plainly acknowledged, when he had done, that he could be content to die a thousand times, were he but assured that the things of which he had been speaking were true: and afterwards, when sentence of death was pronounced upon him, he concluded his defence with this farewell; "Now, gentlemen, (says he) I am going off the stage; 'tis your lot to live and mine to die; but which of us shall fare the better, is unknown to all but God alone." Not the divine Socrates, the glory of the pagan world, who could reason better upon the nature of God, and had sublimer notions of good and evil than almost any man that ever lived, without inspiration, before the times of the gospel; not even he, when upon the brink of immortality, could speak of a future state of existence without a great deal of doubt and uncertainty. But our blessed Saviour has put the case beyond all peradventure, having plainly published this doctrine to the world, and sealed the truth of it, not only by raising others from the dead before unexceptionable witnesses, but by his own resurrection and visible ascension; which was the highest pledge and assurance of a future immortality. And, besides the security of the thing itself, he has also given us the clearest account of the nature of it.

Let us add to this, the admirable confirmation and establishment which the dispensation of the gospel received beyond that of the law. For though the law was introduced with scenes of pomp and majesty, and the gospel by more familiar and rational methods, yet this latter was ratified by a much greater number of miracles, such as could

could be wrought only by a divine power. By these our Lord unquestionably evinced his heavenly commission; his works of this kind, in only three years time, being more than were ever before seen in all the periods of the Jewish church, and many of them too such as were peculiar to himself alone. He raised the dead, which Moses never did; he commanded the winds and the waves of the sea; out of lunatic and possessed persons he expelled the devils, who fled as soon as ever he commanded them to be gone: he cured many inveterate and chronical diseases with the speaking of a word, and some of them without a word spoken, purely by that divine virtue which silently passed from him to those who believed. He searched mens hearts, and revealed the most secret transactions of their minds; which token of the divine presence, always residing with him, he imparted to his disciples and followers, who afterwards exerted it on occasion. The power of working miracles remained not only with the apostles, his immediate successors, but with the primitive christians, through the three first ages of the church; nor was it ever exerted in methods of dread and terror, but in such actions only as were highly pleasing, useful, and beneficial to mankind. And further, as if these things had not been sufficient, our blessed Saviour, the author of this new dispensation, laid down his own life to testify the truth thereof. Covenants were wont to be ratified with blood, and the death of sacrifices; but when our Lord came to introduce the covenant of the gospel, he did not consecrate it with the blood of bulls and goats, but with his own most precious blood, as of a lamb without spot and blemish. And could he give a greater testimony to the truth of his doctrine, and those great things which he had promised to the world, than by sealing it with his blood?

During the time of the Baptist's continuance at Bethabara, the blessed Jesus left his retirement at Nazareth, and, previous to his public ministry, repaired to the banks of the river Jordan, where John was executing his commission from above, in order to be there baptised by him. We cannot impute this conduct of our Lord to any necessity there was for his conforming to the institution of baptism, for purity needs not cleansing; it is, therefore, evident that his motive was to add a sanction to that ordinance, for ever after appointed to be the initiating rite of christianity, "Go baptise all nations," &c.

It appears that John immediately, as it were by a prophetic revelation, knew the Saviour of the world; for we find from the Evangelist, that he acknowledged his superiority, and declined the office. "I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me?" Our Lord's answer, though short, is very full and expressive, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." As if he said, Regard not the precedence at this time, but perform thy office; for it is necessary that we should, in the minutest point, conform to the divine will, by which this institution is enjoined by Moses.

It was fit that he who had the prophets, the star, the angel to foretell his coming into the world, should have his usher to go before him, when he would notify himself to the world: John was the voice of the cryer: Christ was the word of his Father; it was fit this voice should make a noise to the world before the word of his Father should speak to it; John's note was still, Repentance: the ax to the root, the fan to the floor, the chaff to the fire; as his raiment was rough, so was his tongue; and if his food were wild honey, his speech was stinging locusts. Thus must the way be made for Christ in every heart: plausibility is no fit preface to regeneration: if the heart of man had continued upright, God might have been entertained without contradiction; but now violence must be offered to our corruptions, ere we can have room for grace: if the great Way-maker does not cast down hills, and raise up valleys in the bosoms of men, there is no passage for Christ; never will Christ come into that soul where the herald of repentance hath not been before him.

John durst not baptise unbidden: his Master sent him to do this service, and behold, the Master comes to his servant, to call for the participation of that privilege which he himself had instituted, and enjoined. How willingly should we come to our spiritual





Howard Sculp.

CHRIST tempted in the WILDERNESS.

tual superiors, for our part in those mysteries which God hath left in their keeping; yea, how gladly should we come to that Christ, who gives us these blessings, who is given to us in them!

To baptize Christ, seemed too great an honour for the modesty of John to receive: if his mother could say, when her blessed cousin the Virgin Mary came to visit her, "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" how much more might he say, when the divine Son of that mother came to call for a favour from him, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" O holy Baptist, if there were not a greater born of woman than thou; yet thou couldst not be born of a woman, and not need to be baptized of thy Saviour: he baptized with fire, thou with water; little would thy water have availed thee, without his fire: if he had not baptized thee, how wert thou sanctified from the womb? There can be no flesh without filthiness; neither thy supernatural conception, nor thy austere life, could exempt thee from the need of baptism: even they who have not lived to sin after the similitude of Adam, yet are they so tainted with Adam, that unless the second Adam cleanse them by his baptism, they are hopeless; there is no less use of baptism to all, than there is certainty of the need of baptism; John baptized without, Christ within. The more holy a man is, the more sensible he is of his unholiness; no carnal man could have said, "I have need to be baptized of thee."

No sooner is Christ baptized, than he comes forth of the water: the water is no sooner poured on his head, than the heavens are opened, and the Holy Ghost descends upon that head which was baptized: the heavens are never shut while either of the sacraments is duly administered, and received; neither do the heavens ever thus open, without the descent of the Holy Ghost: but now that the God of heaven is baptized, they open unto him, which are opened to all the faithful by him: and that Holy Ghost which proceeded from him, together with the Father, joins with the Father in a sensible testimony of him: that now the world might see what interest he had in the heavens, in the Father, in the Holy Spirit, and might expect nothing but divine blessings from the entrance of such a Mediator.

After our blessed Lord had been thus baptized and declared the Son of God in the glorious manner just described, being full of the Holy Ghost, he retired from John, and was driven by the spirit into the wilderness; not driven by any unnatural violence, but by the efficacy of inspiration, by the influence of that Holy Spirit which descended on him at his baptism, which always resided in him in the same plenitude (not being given to him by measure), but that acted more or less in his humanity, as occasion was offered. The end of this retreat was, that by baffling the temptation of the evil spirit, he might begin to triumph over the grand enemy of mankind in our stead, and point out to us the duty of withstanding his suggestions. "It behoved him in all things to be like to his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-Priest. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." To prepare for this great work of opposing the devil, he abode in the desert forty days and forty nights, in a continual fast, without so much as tasting a bit of bread, or a drop of water: which was the same time that Moses continued fasting on Mount Sinai, both when he received the law from God, and when he made intercession for the grievous sin of the Israelites in worshipping a golden calf.

It is not recorded what happened to our blessed Lord during the time he continued in the desert, only that towards the conclusion of it he began to be hungry; the divinity at length permitting the manhood to yield to this infirmity of human nature. Hereupon the evil spirit, who we may imagine was the prince of darkness himself, having waited all this while to take the advantage of some passion or inclination, perceiving what he thought a fair opportunity for this purpose, drew near to him, and told him, that since he was the Son of God, and therefore superior to the laws of nature, he might assuage his hunger with the very stones, which at his command would be changed into the substance of bread, there being no possibility of his being supplied in a common and ordinary way: which temptation, the more kind and harmless it seemed to be,

was so much the more dangerous : the devil hoping thereby to allure him to shew some superfluous acts of his power, for the honour of his humility, by which he might have made a breach of his resignation and obedience to the will of his heavenly Father. But Jesus answered him, that it was written by Moses, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God:" intimating, that we are, for a supply of all our wants, to depend upon the divine providence of God, who is able with a word to provide for our necessities, as he did for those of the Israelites in the desert with manna ; also, that his meat and drink and life was the observing his Father's word and command, there being a promise of all necessary provisions, either expressed or implied in every commandment of God, to those who are engaged in his work and service, and therefore there was no need of such a supernatural transmutation of stones into bread, as he had wickedly suggested.

The devil, not prevailing by this stratagem, immediately had recourse to another. He takes up our Lord, carries him to Jerusalem, and there sets him upon the highest part of the temple : which was so high on the south side next to the valley, that a man's eyes could scarce reach the unmeasurable height. Here he requires him to shew another demonstration of his divinity, by casting himself down from the place where he stood, at the same time subtilly reminding him again of his being the Son of God, and applying to him a text out of the Psalms, that "God would give his angels charge concerning him, to keep him, and bear him up in their arms, lest at any time he should dash his feet against the stones;" which words if not originally meant of him alone, yet, as spoken in general of all God's servants, might truly be extended to his Son. But Jesus still remaining fixed upon the basis of his humility, soon retorted upon him another text out of Deuteronomy : "It is written again," says he, "thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," as if thou doubtest of his power and goodness ; meaning, that God's care and providence towards us is not to be put to the test by extravagant and unnecessary experiments.

And now the devil, having been twice disappointed, makes his third and last effort. From the pinnacle of the temple he transports our Lord to the top of an exceeding high mountain, from which eminence he gave him a prospect of vast tracts of ground round about him, including some of the most wealthy and spacious kingdoms of the world, of all which he told him he was the lord, and could dispose of them at his own pleasure : all these, says he, I will bestow upon you, and instantly invest you in the possession of them, upon condition that you will only fall down and do homage to me as to your God. The tempter knew that wealth and honour are the baits with which men are most frequently taken, and by which, if the snare did but once lay hold of him, he could most effectually work our Lord's overthrow. He did not now treat him as the Son of God, as he had done in the two preceding temptations, but rather as the son of Joseph, a mere man, who was liable to be taken with the common allurements of the world. This unparalleled boldness and blasphemy provoked our Lord to treat him with the utmost indignity, which he expressed by calling him Satan, an enemy to God, and commanding him to depart : for, says he, it is again written by Moses, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Thus our Lord repelled the last temptation of the evil spirit, who thereupon finding himself intirely frustrated in his present design, and not being able to withstand the powerful words, "Get thee behind me, Satan," departed from him for a season ; resolving however, in the mean time, not to leave off pursuing him with his agents, and being determined to stir up the hatred and envy of mankind as much as possible against him. We here find, that though the voice from heaven announced Christ to be the Son of God ; yet this divine testimony did not allay the malice of Satan, but exasperate it : that venomous serpent swelled with inward poison, and hastened to assail him, whom God hath honoured from heaven. Without blows there can be no victory, no triumph : how had thy power been manifested, if no adversary had tried thee ? The first Adam was tempted and vanquished : the second Adam, to repay and repair that foil, vanquishes in being tempted. Now have we not a Saviour, and High-Priest, "that cannot be touched with

with the feeling of our infirmities; but such an one as was in all things tempted in like manner, yet without sin:" how boldly, therefore, may we go to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace to help in time of need! Yea, this duel was for us: now we see by this conflict of our almighty Champion what manner of adversary we have; how he fights, how he is resisted, how overcome. Now our very temptation affords us comfort, in that we see, the dearer we are to God, the more obnoxious we are to this trial; neither should we be discouraged by the heinousness of those evils to which we are exposed, since we see Christ was thus tempted.

Solitariness is no small help to the success of a temptation. "Woe to him that is alone, for if he fall there is not a second to lift him up." They who, out of an affectation of holiness, seek for solitude in rocks and caves of the deserts, do no less than run into the mouth of the danger of temptation, while they think to avoid it. It was enough for thee, O glorious Saviour, to whose divine power the gates of hell were weakness, thus to challenge the prince of darkness. Our care must be always to shun every occasion of spiritual danger; and to get as far as possible out of the reach of temptations.

Who can be discouraged with seeing the scarcity of friends, or of bodily provision, when he sees his Saviour thus long destitute of all earthly comforts, both of society and sustenance? Oh the policy and malice of that old serpent! when he sees Christ betray some infirmity of nature in being hungry, then he lays forest at him by temptations. His eye was never off from our Lord all the time of his sequestration; and now, thinking he spies only one part to lie open, he drives at it with all his might. We have to do with an adversary no less vigilant than malicious, who will be sure to watch all opportunities to do us mischief; and where he sees any probability of gaining any advantage over our weakness, will not neglect it. How should we stand upon our guard for prevention; that both we may not give him opportunity to hurt, nor receive hurt by those we have given him!

When our Saviour was hungry, Satan tempts him in matter of food; and then, respecting wealth or glory: he well knows both what baits to fish with, and when and how to lay them: how safe and happy shall we be, if we can employ our greatest care where we discern the most danger!

To turn stones into bread, had been no more fault in itself than to turn water into wine; but to do this in a distrust of his Father's providence, to abuse his power and liberty, in doing it, to work a miracle at Satan's option, had been dishonourable to the Son of God: nothing is more common with our spiritual enemy, than, by occasion of want, to move us to unwarrantable courses. Thou art poor, steal; thou canst not rise by honest means, use indirect ones: how easy had it been for our Saviour to have confounded Satan by the power of his godhead! but he rather chuses to vanquish him by the sword of the Spirit, that he might teach us how to resist and overcome the powers of darkness. If he had subdued Satan by the almighty power of the Deity, we might have had an act to wonder at, not to imitate. Now he uses that weapon which may be familiar to us, that he may teach our weakness how to be victorious. Nothing in heaven or earth can beat the forces of hell, but the word of God.

In the first assault, Satan moves Christ to doubt of his Father's providence, and to use unlawful means to help himself: in the next, he moves him to presume upon his Father's protection, and the service of his blessed angels: he grounds the first upon a conceit of want, the next of abundance. If he deal in extremes, it is all to one end, which is, to mislead to evil: if we cannot be driven down to despair, he labours to lift us up to presumption; not one foil only can put this bold spirit out of countenance: temptations, like waves, break in one on the neck of another; while we are in this warfare, we must expect that the repulse of one temptation doth but pave the way to another.

Methinks I see Christ hoisted upon the highest battlements of the temple, whose very roof was an hundred and thirty cubits high; and Satan standing by him, with this speech in his mouth: 'Well, then, since in the matter of nourishment thou wilt needs depend upon thy Father's providence, that he can without means sustain thee, take now further trial

of that providence, in thy miraculous preservation; cast thyself down from this height: behold, thou art here in Jerusalem, the most famous and holy city of the world; here thou art, on the top of the pinnacle of that temple which is dedicated to thy Father, and to thyself, if thou be God; the eyes of all men are now fixed upon thee; there cannot be devised a more ready way to spread thy glory, and to proclaim thy Deity, than by casting thyself headlong to the earth. All the world will say, there is more in thee than a man; and as to danger, there can be none, for what can hurt him that is the Son of God? And wherefore serves that glorious guard of angels, which have, by divine commission, taken upon them the charge of thy humanity? since therefore, in one act, thou mayest be both safe and celebrated, trust thy Father, and those thy serviceable and obedient spirits, with thine assured preservation: "Cast thyself down."

Why did Satan carry up Christ so high, but that his fall might thereby be the more deadly? so deals he still with us; he exalts us, that we may be dangerously abased; he puffs sinful mortals up with swelling thoughts of their own worthiness, that they may be vile in the eyes of God, and fall into condemnation: it is the manner of God, to cast down that he may raise, to abase that he may exalt; on the contrary, Satan raises up that he may throw down, and intends nothing less than our dejection in our advancement. Height of place gives opportunity of temptation. Thus busy is that wicked one, in working against the members of Christ. If any of them be in eminence above others, those he labours most to ruin. They had need stand fast that stand high: respecting such, there is more danger of their falling, and more hurt by their fall.

But what is this I see? Satan himself with a Bible under his arm, and with a text in his mouth, "It is written, he shall give his angels charge over thee." How still doth subtlety in that wicked one strive with presumption! Who could not but greatly wonder at this, if he did not consider, that since the devil dared to touch the sacred body of Christ with his hand, he may well touch the scriptures of God with his tongue? Let no man henceforth be surprised to hear heretics or hypocrites quote scriptures, when Satan himself hath not spared to cite them: what are they the worse for this, more than that holy body which is here transported? Some have been poisoned by their meats and drinks, yet both these nourish us, or nothing can: it is not barely the letter of the scripture that is effectual, but the sense; if we divide these two, we profane and abuse that word we refer to. No devil is so dangerous as the religious devil. If good meat turn to the nourishment, not of nature, but of the disease, we ought not, on that account, to forbear feeding, but should endeavour to purge the body of those evil humours which cause the stomach to work against itself.

To cast ourselves upon any immediate providence, when means do not fail, is to disobey, instead of believing God: we may challenge God on his word, but must not strain him beyond it; we may make account of what he promised, but not wrest his promises by unjust examinations, and, where no need is, make trial of his power, justice, and mercy, by devices of our own. All the devils in hell could not elude the force of this divine answer: and now Satan sees how vainly he tempts Christ to tempt God.

The temple is not high enough for his next temptation; he therefore carries up Christ to the top of an exceeding high mountain: all enemies, in pitched battle, strive for the benefit of the hill, or river, or wind, or sun: that which his servant Balak did by his instigation, himself doth now immediately: he changes places, in hope of prevailing. If the obscure country will not move us, he tries what the court can do: if not our home, the tavern; if not the field, our closet: as no place is left free by his malice, so no place must be made prejudicial by our carelessness; and as we should always watch over ourselves, so then most when the opportunity carries cause of suspicion.

Wherefore is Christ carried up so high, but for the sake of prospect? If the kingdoms of the earth, and their glory, were only to be presented to his imagination, the valley would have served; if to the outward sense, no hill could suffice: circular bodies, though small, cannot be seen at once. This situation was adapted to both; divers kingdoms lying round about Judæa were represented to the eye; the glory of them to the imagination:

nation: Satan meant, the eye could tempt the fancy, no less than the fancy could tempt the will. How many thousand souls have died of the wound of the eye! If we do not let in sin at the window of the eye, or the door of the ear, it cannot enter into our hearts.

Never did our Saviour say "Get thee hence, Satan," till now. It is a just indignation that is conceived at the motion of a rivalry with God: neither yet did Christ exercise his divine power in this command, but by the necessary force of scripture; he thus drives away that impure tempter: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The rest of our Saviour's answers were indeed full and direct to admit of a reply; but this was so flat and absolute, that it utterly daunted the courage of Satan, put him to a shameful flight, and made him for the time weary of his trade.

Satan was now no longer able to maintain the field, being fully satisfied that Jesus was God incarnate, and that he had no more power over him in the flesh, than in the spirit; which was the sole foundation whereon he had raised his vain-glorious expectations. And thus was this infernal serpent, that great dragon which deceived our first parents, and tempted them so successfully that they lost their innocence and paradise, and incurred the sad sentence of misery and death for their disobedience to their Maker, and, which was infinitely worse than death, forfeited the favour of God, and the hopes of heaven, without a mercy greater than the tongues of men and angels can express; thus was he, who so fatally deceived the first of human race, and bore such a sway over their wretched posterity for many ages after, gloriously vanquished by the Seed of that very woman who first hearkened to his treacherous suggestions; and after all his presumptuous insolence to the great Redeemer, forced to cry out with a lamentable voice, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not."

Then began to be fulfilled that early prophecy, in which God said to the serpent, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel:" and it was carried on throughout the afflicted, but yet conquering life of the holy Jesus, and completed upon his cross, when "by death he destroyed him that had the power of death," that is, the devil; "and having spoiled principalities and powers" by those very sufferings which Satan's malice brought upon him, "he triumphed over them." And though the serpent was permitted to fulfil the prophecy in this bruising our Saviour's heel, yet it was to his own destruction, and gave an incurable wound to his own head.

The two disciples that were with John when he bore his last testimony concerning Jesus, having taken notice of repeated tokens of respect and veneration shewn by their master to this unknown person, were resolved if possible to get acquainted with him, and to that end followed him at a distance as he passed along. Perhaps they might be expressly directed, by the Baptist, to apply themselves to this new Master, who was shortly to succeed him in the office of a public minister, and infinitely to surpass him in the execution thereof. Jesus looking back upon them, demanded in a courteous and friendly manner the reason of their thus following him? To which they replied, in the most respectful language they were masters of, that they were desirous of learning the place of his habitation in order to know where to wait upon him at a more convenient opportunity: it being then within two hours of sun-set. Jesus told them, they might satisfy themselves if they would go along with him: and thereupon forthwith admitted them into his conversation, and took them with him to his lodging, where they continued the remaining part of the afternoon, and probably all the following night.

One of these disciples was Andrew, the brother of Simon, who was afterwards called Peter: and the other is thought to have been John the Evangelist, whose custom it is, not to name himself when he speaks of matters wherein he was concerned. The heavenly discourses of Jesus had such an effect upon their minds, that they were now fully convinced of the truth of what the Baptist had said concerning him: whereupon An-

drew, either that evening or the next morning, took care to find out his brother Simon, that he might reveal to him the first glorious discovery they had made. "We have met," says he, "and conversed with the Messiah, or, as his name signifies in Greek, the Christ; that is, the anointed of God, whom we have so long expected as the Redeemer of Israel." Simon, being ravished at the news, immediately desired to be brought where Jesus was; which was accordingly done: and when Jesus beheld him, he said, "Thy name at present is Simon, the son of Jonah; but hereafter thou shalt be called Cephas, or Peter, which signifies a rock, or stone:" by which change of name Jesus hinted to him the change that should shortly be made in his state of life; and perhaps also he might thereby give him to understand, that, by his preaching he should be instrumental in laying the foundation of the church. Luke gives us the fullest account of Peter's call, in which he takes notice of the large draught of fishes.

When our Lord was preaching, the people not only followed, but pressed upon him; while they were ravished with the convincing power of his speech; yet our Saviour did not check their irreverent thronging, but rather encouraged their forwardness. We cannot offend thee, O God, with the importunity of our desires; it pleases thee well that the kingdom of heaven should suffer violence. Our slackness displeases thee; our vehemence never.

The throng of auditors however forced Christ to leave the shore, and to make Peter's ship his pulpit. Never were there such nets cast out of that fishing-boat before: while he was on the land, he healed the sick bodies by his touch; now he was on the sea, he cured sick souls by his doctrine; and purposely severed himself from the multitude, that he might unite them to him. He that made both sea and land, causes both of them to conspire to the opportunities of doing good.

Simon was busy washing his nets: even those nets that caught nothing, must be washed, no less than if they had succeeded well: the night's toil does not excuse his day's work: little did Simon think of leaving those nets, which he so carefully washed; and now Christ interrupts him with the favour and blessing of his gracious presence. He that would so easily lend Christ his hand, and his ship, was likely soon after to bestow himself upon his Saviour.

Simon hath no sooner done this service to Christ, than Christ is preparing for his reward: when the sermon is ended, the ship-room shall be paid for abundantly; neither shall the host expect any other pay-master than himself: "Launch forth into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." That ship which afforded Christ an opportunity of catching men upon the shore, was to be requited with a plentiful draught of fish in the deep: it had been as easy for our Saviour to have brought the fish to Peter's ship, close to the shore; yet, chusing rather to have the ship carried to the shoal of fish, he gives this command, "Launch forth into the deep:" in his miracles, he ever loves to meet nature in her bounds; and when she hath done her best, to supply the rest by his over-ruling power; the same power therefore, that could have caused the fishes to leap upon dry land, or to leave themselves forsaken of the waters, upon the sands of the lake, rather ordains to find them in a place natural to their abode and existence: "Launch out into the deep."

Simon, rather with a desire to gratify and obey his guest, than to please himself, bestows one cast of his net: had Christ enjoined him a harder task, he had not refused; yet his consent was not given without an allegation of the unlikelihood of success, "Master, we have travailed all night, and caught nothing; yet at thy word I will let down the net." The night was the fittest time for the hopes of their trade; not unjustly might Simon doubt of his speed by day, when he had spent the night in unprofitable labour: sometimes God crosses the fairest of our expectations, and gives a blessing to those times and means whereof we despair. That pains cannot be cast away, which we resolve to lose for Christ. Never man threw out his net at the word of his Saviour, and drew it back empty. Who would not obey thee, O Christ, since thou dost so bountifully requite our weakest services? It was not mere retribution that was intended in this event, but instruction also: this act was not without a mystery; he that was to be made



PETER'S FAITH IN CHRIST.



The MARRIAGE at CANAAN.

made a fisher of men did in this wonderful draught foresee his success. The kingdom of heaven is like a draw-net cast into the sea, which, when it is full, men draw to land. The very first draught that Peter made after his appointment to the apostleship, inclosed no less than three thousand souls. O powerful gospel, that can fetch sinful men from out of the depths of natural corruption! O happy souls, that, from the blind and muddy cells of our wicked nature, are drawn forth to the glorious liberty of the sons of God! Simon's net breaks with the store; abundance is sometimes no less troublesome than want; the net would have held, if Christ had not meant to overcharge Simon both with blessing and admiration: how happily is that net broken, whose rupture draws the fisher to Christ! Though the net brake, yet the fish escaped not: he that brought them thither to be taken, held them there till they were caught.

Though Simon was a skilful fisher, and well knew the depth of his trade; yet now perceiving more than art or nature in this draught, he falls down at the feet of Jesus, saying, "Lord, depart from me, for I am a sinful man." Himself is caught in this net: he doth not greedily fall upon so unexpected and profitable a booty, but he turns his eyes from the draught, to himself; from the act to the Author; acknowledging vileness in the one, in the other majesty: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man."

O my soul, be not weary of complaining of thine own wretchedness, humble thyself to him who knows thy vileness; be astonished at those mercies which have shamed thine ill deservings: thy Saviour hath no power to go away from a prostrate heart: he that resists the proud, encourages the lowly, "Fear not, for I will make thee henceforth a fisher of men." Lo, this humility is rewarded with an apostleship: what had the earth ever more glorious, than a legacy from heaven? He that bade Christ go from him, shall have the honour to go first on this happy errand: this was a trade that Simon had no skill in: it could not but be enough to him, that Christ said, "I will make thee;" the miracle shewed him able to make good his word; he that hath power to command the fishes to be taken, can easily enable the hands to take them.

After this, our Lord called Philip and Nathaniel: he came with his disciples into the town of Cana, where there was a marriage feast, to which himself, and his mother Mary, and some of his disciples, were invited. Here the wine happening to fall short sooner than was expected, the blessed Virgin took notice of it, and, being troubled for the disgrace that would thereby come upon his friends, addressed herself to her Son, and desired him to supply the present deficiency; she having seen him perform miracles on other occasions as great as that of turning water into wine, though no such miracles are recorded; this, therefore, is called the beginning of miracles. But Jesus told her, that she had no need to put him in mind of whatever was fitting for him to perform; besides, that the time was not yet come in which he was to work miracles in public; but that, notwithstanding, he was ready to comply with her request in this particular. Upon this answer, the blessed Virgin called aside the servants (who, being conscious that the wine was spent, must also of necessity be witnesses of the miracle which she expected to be wrought), and bid them go to Jesus, and do whatsoever he commanded them.

Now there stood in the house where the marriage was celebrated six water-pots (cisterns or jars of stone), which were usually filled with water, in order to draw forth for every man's use, according to the manner of the Jews, who constantly washed before meals, and were subject to a great number of purifications. Each of these vessels contained about two or three firkins, which, on a moderate computation, made the contents of them all amount to fifteen firkins, English measure. Jesus ordered these pots to be filled with water, which the servants immediately executed, filling them up to the brim. This being done, he commanded them to draw out some of the liquor, and carry it to the master of the feast; who, tasting the liquor they had brought him, and not knowing from whence they had it (for the servants did not tell him that they drew it out of the water-pots), went directly to the bridegroom, and told him, that it was the usual custom to present the guests with the strongest and richest wine at the beginning, and to give them the worst when by long drinking they had made themselves unable to distinguish: 'But (says he) you, on the contrary, have preposterously kept

kept the best wine till the latter end of the feast, to give it us when nobody expects so good entertainment. The bridegroom knew as little of the matter as the master of the feast, and doubtless was as much surpris'd when he tasted the water that was changed into wine: but the admiration of both of them was heightened, when, upon the question's being put, the servants related what they had done, and at whose command. Then the divine power of Jesus was adored and magnified by all present; for from this miracle they concluded he was a prophet sent from God, and thereupon believed on him, not as a common teacher, but a divine person. This miracle at Cana in Galilee was the first of those miracles which he performed before any considerable number of witnesses, and by means of which he got the reputation of being a prophet.

A wicked writer has endeavoured to injure Christ's character, on account of this miracle; but we observe, that temperance was required and observed at wedding-feasts among the ancient Jews, even by men of good estate, on account of the continuance of the entertainments for seven days successively: the governor of the feast, who presided for that purpose, and was, as we before observed, of the sacerdotal order, exacted temperance of the guests; and there were persons appointed to break glass vessels, to give the company notice when they had drunk enough. As it cannot therefore, be proved, so ought it not to be inferred, that the wine produced by our Lord was intirely drunk, or that the company went into excesses. Nay, we may add, that if the temperance of the Galileans bore any proportion to the modesty and decorum of that people, there can be no room to doubt that their behaviour at this feast was more sober and regular than was usual with the other Jews on like occasions. All this ought to have been considered before any reflections had been made at random on Jesus, for his being present at an entertainment among the Galileans.

On the other supposition, that our Lord converted no more than about ten gallons and a half of water into wine, according to the Syrian metretes, though this is a much smaller quantity than the former, yet it does not seem credible that more than forty of our quarts should have been drunk at that meeting, after the company had well drunk, or with some degree of cheerfulness. And if some of this lesser Syrian quantity be supposed to have been left till the following days, or given as a small present to the bridegroom, it must likewise be allowed that sobriety might as well have been preserved though the greater attic quantity had been given by Jesus, as a more noble benefaction, and more worthy of his miraculous bounty. So that, in fine, it cannot any ways be justly inferred that an intemperate abuse of our Lord's miraculous favour was shewn either by the bridegroom or his company.

On this occasion, it cannot be improper to observe, that Mr. Woolston has made an unjust reflection on our English translation of the word Metretes, as signifying a firkin, when he says, that two or three pints are a measure as agreeable to the original as two or three firkins. For, however inaccurate our translation may be in some other respects, yet here his criticism is very ill placed, on supposition that the attic metretes be here understood, which answers to cadus, a vessel of about nine gallons. And if the lowest Syrian measure which sunk the metretes into a congius, that is, a vessel of nine wine pints, be here understood, there was a quantity of more than four quarts in each metretes of the water that was made wine by Jesus. So that it is evident that two or three pints apiece is a very wrong translation of this measure. But as this was an ill-guarded piece of criticism, so the design of it was more to expose the miracle than the translation.

But our author and his rabbi go on to insinuate that not only the company were drunk, but that 'Jesus and his mother bore a part in their revellings;' which is what they express in mean and vulgar terms, that deserve the utmost contempt and abhorrence.

We may learn from this miracle, that in all our exigences we cannot apply to any with a more assured prospect of success than to the Maker and Giver of all things. The blessed Virgin knew to whom she sued, she had good reason to know the divine nature and power of her Son. Perhaps the bridegroom was not so needy, but that if not by his purse, yet by his credit, he might have supplied the want, or, it were hard if some of the friendly guests (had they been duly solicited) might not have furnished him with so much wine as might

might suffice for the last service of a dinner: but blessed Mary knew a nearer way; she did not think best to procure the liquor in small quantities at the shallow channel, but runs rather to the well-head, where she may dip, and fill the firkins at once with ease. It may be she saw that the attendants of Christ (who unbidden followed to that feast, and unexpectedly added to the number of the guests) might contribute to that defect; and therefore she justly solicits her son Jesus for a supply. Whether we want bread, or water, or wine, necessities or comforts, whither should we run, O Saviour, but to that infinite munificence of thine, which neither denies the gift nor upbraids the receiver? We cannot want, we cannot abound, but from thee: give us what thou wilt, so thou give us content and thankfulness with what thou givest.

There is a marriage to which we are invited; yea, wherein we are already interested, not as guests only, but as the bride; in which there shall be no want of the wine of gladness. We may wonder, if in these earthly banquets there be not some want: "In thy presence, O Saviour, there is fullness of joy, and at thy right-hand are pleasures for evermore. Blessed are they that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb."

Even in our Lord's rough answer, the blessed Virgin discerns some cause of hope. If his hour were not yet come, it was therefore coming; when the expectation of the guests, and the necessity of the occasion, had made fit room for the miracle, it shall come forth, and challenge their wonder. Faithfully therefore, and submissively, doth she turn her speech from her Son to the waiters, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." How well doth it beseem the mother of Christ to agree with his Father in heaven, whose voice from heaven said, "This is my well-beloved Son, hear him!" she that said of herself, "Be it unto me according to thy word," says unto others, "Whatsoever he saith to you, do it." The way to have miracles wrought in us, is by yielding a cheerful obedience to his word.

The waiters could not but be surprised at so unseasonable a command; "Fill the water-pots." They might probably say within themselves, 'It is wine that we want, why do we go to fetch water? Doth this holy man mean thus to quench our thirst, and cool our stomachs?' If there be no remedy, we could have sought this supply unbidden; yet so far hath the charge of Christ's mother prevailed, that, instead of carrying flaggons of wine to the table, they fetch pails-full of water from the cisterns. It is in vain to plead unlikelihoods against the command of an almighty power.

He that could have created wine immediately in those vessels, will rather turn water into wine. In all the course of Christ's miracles, I never find him making aught of nothing; all his great works are grounded upon former existences; he multiplied the bread, he changed the water, he restored the withered limbs, he raised the dead, and still wrought upon that which was; and did not make that which was not: what doth he in the ordinary way of nature, but turn the watery juice that arises up from the root into wine; only he does this now suddenly, and at once, which he usually does by sensible degrees. It is ever duly observed by the Son of God, not to do more of a miracle than he needs.

These transactions happened a little before the passover, to the celebration of which Jesus, according to custom, went up to Jerusalem. When he came thither, he went into the outer court of the temple, where he saw those who had bought oxen, and sheep, and doves, for the sacrifices, selling their commodities to the people, and the money-changers carrying on their traffick, though the place was consecrated solely to divine worship. Being filled with indignation at the sight, he immediately made a scourge of small cords, and, with no other weapon but this, drove them all out of the temple, both the merchants and their cattle, and overturned the counting tables of the money-changers, pouring out their money upon the ground, none of them making any resistance against him. The sellers of doves also he commanded to depart with their goods, charging them all to take it as a warning for the future, never more to turn the temple of his Father into a house of merchandise.

When the disciples of Jesus saw these things, they called to mind a passage in the Psalms (which is much more applicable to Jesus than the Psalmist), wherein it is said, "The zeal of thine house has eaten me up," or consumed me. But the other Jews, who were then in the temple, contended that this fact could not be warranted but by a

prophetical authority; which authority, they said, they would then believe him to have received from God when they had seen him perform some miracle as a testimony of his commission. In answer hereto, Jesus told them, that this should be a sign to them: "They should destroy this temple, and he would raise it again in three days." The Jews, who understood him as speaking of the temple of stone in which they were then conversing, replied, "That they could not conceive how it was possible for him to raise that temple in three days, which had already been six and forty years in building," since the time it was undertaken by Herod the Great. But the true meaning of Jesus was, that the temple of his body should be destroyed; or that he himself should be put to death, and that he would rise again from the dead in three days. Which things he thus predicted in a figurative manner, according to the custom of the ancient prophets, who were seldom understood till their prophecies were actually fulfilled. And thus the disciples of Jesus, after he was risen from the dead, remembered this prophecy, and interpreted it in the right sense, adding thereto other of his predictions concerning himself; of which, as well as of many predictions concerning the Messiah, in the Old Testament, they had seen very remarkable parts accomplished. This confirmed them in their belief on their Master, and made them more intirely depend upon those promises of his which were not yet fulfilled.

While Jesus remained at Jerusalem, during the feast of unleavened bread, many of the people believed on him, being convinced of his divine mission by the miracles which they saw him perform. But Jesus, knowing the secrets of men's hearts, and not wanting any outward information concerning them, easily discerned the nature of this their belief, and how unlikely it was to bear any violent assault, and hold out in a time of temptation and suffering. And, in consequence of this knowledge, he did not think fit to run the hazard of their inconstancy, and trust himself too much in their hands: for which reason, he avoided conversing too freely with them, and discovering more fully who he was. Not that he was unable to defend himself publicly against their utmost efforts, had there been any design formed against him; but because, as man, it was necessary he should be subject to the common laws of humanity, without exerting a divine power in his own defence; and consequently that he should keep himself out of the way of those who would wish to betray him, till the time appointed by the Father for his being made a sacrifice was fulfilled.

There was at this time of our Lord's abode in Jerusalem, one Nicodemus, of the sect of the Pharisees, a member of the great sanhedrim, who, being a pious man, upon hearing of the miracles wrought by Jesus, began to look upon him as some extraordinary person, and was very desirous of conversing with him. But, as he durst not be seen or known to visit one who was despised by the rest of the rulers, he therefore, for fear of offending those his colleagues in the government, came to Jesus by night, and accosted him in this manner: "Master, we are convinced that thou art sent by God to teach and instruct us in his way; for no man is able to do such miracles as thou dost, without having received his power from God; and we are certain that God would never grant such a power to confirm falsities." Having premised this, he was about to ask Jesus what it behoved him to do, in order to his becoming a partaker of the kingdom of God, which he was informed was now very near at hand.

Jesus, who, as we have before remarked, knew the thoughts of all men, observing that the attention of Nicodemus was not so much turned towards the excellency and power of his doctrine, as towards the miracles by which that doctrine was confirmed, immediately gave him an answer, which at the same time prevented his question, and corrected the false notions on which he had conceived it: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." As if he had said, 'Assure thyself that the bare acknowledging me to be the Messiah will not be sufficient to render thee a member of the kingdom which I am about to set up; for no man can enjoy the blessings of that kingdom, without being renewed in his mind, will, and affections, by the operations of the Holy Spirit, so as to become a new creature.



CHRIST teaches NICODEMUS the necessity of regeneration.



This was strange philosophy to Nicodemus; who, attending only to the literal sound, not sense of our Saviour's words, asks him how a man of full years can be born again. But Jesus told him not to wonder, since this was not a work of humanity, but the fruit of God's Spirit. For "the Spirit bloweth where it listeth," and is, like the wind, certain and notorious in the effects, but secret in the principle and manner of production. And therefore this doctrine was not to be taken according to the proportions of natural principles or experiments of sense, but to the secrets of preternatural speculations.

Then Christ proceeds in his sermon, telling him, there are yet higher things for him to apprehend and believe; for this, in respect of some other mysteries of his gospel, was but as earth in comparison of heaven. Then he discoursed of his descent from heaven, foretells his death and ascension, and the blessing of redemption, which he came to work for mankind: he preaches the love of the Father, the mission of the Son, the rewards of faith, and the glories of eternity; he upbraids the unbelieving and impenitent, and declares the differences of a holy and corrupt conscience; the shame and fears of the one, and the confidence and serenity of the other.

From Jerusalem the holy Jesus goes into the country of Judæa, attended by many disciples, who were convinced of his divinity by the evidence of his miracles; and there he tarried with them and baptized; at which time John also was baptizing in Ænon, near Salem, a place chosen by him as commodious for that purpose. But John's disciples, hearing that Jesus baptized, came to tell their master, that the person to whom he bare witness, received profelytes with the same ceremony of baptism as he did, and that there was a great resort of people to him. In answer to whom John says; I can do no more than I have commission from God to do, and that commission doth not equal me to him; and therefore you cannot but remember, that I always said of myself, I am not the Messiah, but only his herald.

John therefore acquitting himself thus in public, by renewing his former testimony, that Christ was the Messiah, foretells that his own ministry was near an end; that the Messiah should daily increase in splendor, but that he should proportionably decrease, for Christ came from above, was above all: and the sum of his doctrine was, that which he had heard and seen from the Father, whom God had sent for that purpose; to whom God had set his seal, that he was true; who spake the words of God; whom the Father loved; to whom he gave the Spirit without measure, and into whose hands God had delivered all things; this was he, whose testimony the world received not. And that they might know not only what person they slighted, but how great a salvation they also neglected, he sums up all his sermons, and finishes his mission with this solemn declaration, "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

John, who had learnt to despise the world and all its exterior vanities, did his duty so justly, and without respect of persons, that as he reprov'd the people for their prevarications, so he spared not Herod Antipas*, though a prince, for his; but frankly and honestly told him, that it was utterly unlawful for him to live with Herodias† his brother Philip's wife. Herodias being highly offended with this reproof from John to Herod, designed him mischief, and would have removed him out of the way by some death
or

* This Antipas, or Antipater (for they are words of the same signification), was the son of Herod the Great, by one of his wives, named Cleopatra, a native of Jerusalem. In his first will, his father (as we said before) named him successor in his kingdom, but afterwards changing his mind, made his son Archelaus king of Judæa, and gave to Antipas the title only of tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa, which made him appeal to Augustus at Rome, in order to have his father's former will confirmed, and the latter reversed, but he did not obtain his end. See Bradshaw's Josephus, Antiq. l. 17. c. 8. p. 316.

† This woman was the daughter of Aristobulus and Bernice, sister to king Agrippa, and grand-daughter to Herod the Great. She was, at first, married to her uncle Philip, son of the same Herod by Mariamne, by whom she had a daughter named Salome, the same who pleased Herod so well in her dancing; and how she came to run from one brother to live with another, Josephus has thus related the story.— "Antipas, in his passage to Rome, made some stay with his brother Philip, where he fell so passionately in love with his wife Herodias, that he could not forbear expressing it to her, and promised her withal, that at his return from Rome, he would put away his own wife, and marry her. Upon these conditions Herodias accepted of the offer, and, as soon as Antipas was returned, and his wife gone (for she, having notice

or other, but could not any way compass it: for Herod himself feared the people, therefore he only for the present cast John into prison.

The imprisonment of John happened, in all probability, about the end of the thirtieth year of the vulgar æra, that is, in the true year of Christ 34: for if Jesus was about thirty years of age when John began to baptize, as we read he was; and if John continued three years and an half in the exercise of his ministry, as we have endeavoured to prove he did; it follows, that Jesus must be in the thirty-fourth year of his age when John was cast into prison by Herod. The time of the Baptist's continuance in prison, till he was put to death at the request of Salome the daughter of Herodias, was a year or more, if it be true, as is generally agreed, that his death happened at the end of the thirty-first, or the beginning of the thirty-second, year of the vulgar æra.

We are informed by Josephus, that the prison into which John was cast, was the castle of Machæras, or Macheronte, which lay beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Reuben, to the north-east of the lake Asphaltitis, two or three leagues from Jordan, and not far from the place where that river discharges itself into the Dead Sea. This castle had been fortified by the Asmoneans, but Gabinius demolished it: after which it was fortified anew by Aristobulus, and lastly by Herod, who made it much stronger than it ever was before. Either at Machæras, or in the neighbourhood of it, was an excellent hot-spring.

Josephus gives a very remarkable testimony concerning John the Baptist, in the place where he mentions his imprisonment: for having been speaking of a battle, in which Herod was routed, he goes on in the following manner, according to our most common English translation.-----“Now the generality of the Jews were of opinion, that this was only a just judgment of God upon Herod and his army, for the business of John, surnamed the Baptist, which excellent man this tetrarch murdered. And what was his crime, but only his exhorting the Jews to the love and practice of virtue, and in the first place of piety and justice; and to a regeneration by baptism, and a new life, not by abstaining from this and that particular sin, but by an habitual purity of mind, as well as of body. Now so great was the credit and authority of this holy man, as appeared by the multitude of his disciples, and the veneration they had for his doctrine, that Herod did not know how far a man of his reputation and spirit might influence the people towards a revolt. So that, for fear of the worst, he chose rather to take him out of the way in time, before any hurt was done, than put it to the hazard of an unprofitable repentance when it should be too late. Wherefore he sent him bound to Machæras (the place before mentioned), with order to have him put to death; which was accordingly executed: and that impious fact was followed with a divine vengeance upon Herod, for the blood of that just man, as the Jews reasonably enough persuaded themselves.” This character of the Baptist, from such a person as Josephus, redounds very much to the honour of that forerunner of the gospel.

In St. John's deportment towards Herod, says a modern author, we may observe three excellent properties of a good minister of Christ:

I. His courage and fidelity in the discharge of his duty. Notwithstanding Herod's respect to him, and compliance in many things, he will not dispense with him in any one criminal case. He was not like the unjust steward, who could ingratiate himself with his master's debtors, by making them large abatements in their accounts, by altering the

notice of the engagement between her husband and Herodias, made her escape to her father Aretas, king of Petra), she, with her daughter Salome, left her husband Philip, and, coming directly to Antipas, for ever after lived with him in a state of incest, Lev. xviii. 15. nor was her ambition much less criminal than her lust: for, growing uneasy to see her brother Agrippa promoted to the title of a king, while her new husband Antipas had no more than that of a tetrarch, she pressed him so much, that he determined to make a journey to Rome, with an intention to ask the like dignity of Caligula the emperor; but the emperor, being prejudiced by several letters, which Agrippa had written against Antipas, instead of advancing him, deprived him of his tetrarchy, and condemned him to perpetual banishment.” The emperor however, understanding that Herodias was Agrippa's sister, shewed an inclination to pardon her; but she chose rather to follow her husband in the calamity she had brought upon him, than to owe any thing to her brother's fortune; so that they were both confiscated and banished together, first into France, and afterwards into Spain, where they died.





CHRIST and the WOMAN of SAMARIA at Jacobs Well.

Barbier.

sum of one hundred to fifty, allowing the habitual practice of one vice or sin in exchange for some good works. Thus St. Paul calls upon the Corinthians for intire obedience: "As ye abound in every thing, in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also."

II. His simplicity and honesty. He strikes at a crime where-ever he finds it, without fearing what the consequence may be. Too many politic preachers would have reasoned thus with themselves: 'I am now in the favour of this great man; and if I still keep him my friend, I may through him do much good, not only to particular persons, but to the church in general: but if I should affront him, by telling him plainly of his lewdness, I might not only endanger my own head, but stir him up to persecute all my disciples.' But alas! this is the wisdom of this world; the piety of those times required it not: neither our Lord, nor St. John, nor any of the apostles, ever practised it, but the quite contrary, though they foresaw the consequences plainly enough.

III. His zeal and earnestness in admonishing Herod. He tells him plainly of his sin, to his face, in his own court, among all his attendants and guards. This some would have called zeal without knowledge. He could have done no more, if he had been asked to solemnize this marriage, or even enjoined by some penalty to maintain it in word or writing. But he is only required to let it alone, to chuse some other text, to press some other duties, and all shall be well. No, he dares not hold his peace, but must speak this word to Herod, whether he will hear, or whether he will forbear. This opinion, prophets and teachers of old had of their office: if they suffered sin upon any man, if he died in it without their admonition, they, as watchmen over his soul, were to answer for it; and therefore their faces are said to be hardened as flint and adamant, that they might not be dismayed at the looks of the most lofty sinners, but freely and impartially speak to them every word of God.

It is reported that Herodias, when the head of this good man was given her by her daughter Salome, pierced the tongue of it with a bodkin, in revenge for the affront which she had received from his admonition to Herod. The eastern people also pretend, that when John's head was cut off, the blood that issued from his body could not be stanch'd, till God had revenged it by bringing desolation upon the Jewish people. But probably this expression, "the blood was not stanch'd," in the eastern mode of speaking, is only figurative, which signifies no more than that his blood cried for vengeance, till the time of the desolation of Jerusalem by the Romans.

The Mahometans cite several expressions of the gospel as used by St. John, though they really were our Saviour's. They have likewise composed dialogues between Jesus Christ and John the Baptist. All this, though done without ground, proves the veneration which that people have for the latter.

We have no account, in the gospel, where John was buried: but in the time of Julian the apostate, a tomb was shewn for his at Samaria, where the inhabitants of the country opened it, and burnt part of the bones: the rest were saved by some christians, who carried them to an abbot of Jerusalem, named Philip. It is needless to enlarge on the pretended translations of these bones, particularly of the head, which, if we believe the Romanists, is yet to be seen at Amiens. This head was saluted by the ingenious abbot Villeloin, who tells us in his Memoirs, that it was the fifth or sixth head of St. John which he had the honour to kiss: so apt is superstition to multiply its objects!

Jesus, hearing that John was cast into prison, and that the Pharisees were envious at him for the great multitudes of people that resorted to his baptism, which he ministered not in his own person, but by the deputation of his disciples, they finishing the ministration which himself began, he left Judæa, and came again into Galilee; and in his passage he touched at Sychar a city of Samaria: where, in the heat of the day and weariness of his journey, he sat himself down in a place where Jacob had once digged a well; whither, when his disciples were gone to buy meat, a Samaritan woman came to draw water, of whom Jesus asked some to cool his thirst. The woman little knew the excellency of the person who asked so small a favour; but prosecuting the spite of her nation, and the interest

terest and * quarrel of the schism, demanded why he, who was a Jew, should ask water of her that was a Samaritan, the Jews having no commerce or communication of familiarity with the Samaritans? This quarrel, so implanted, improved in every understanding; for though the woman perceived Jesus to be a prophet, yet she undertook thus to question with him: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain: and ye say that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus knew the schism was great enough already, and he was unwilling to make it wider; and though he gave testimony to the truth by saying, "Salvation is of the Jews, and we know what we worship, ye do not;" yet because the subject of the question was shortly to be taken away, Jesus takes occasion to preach the gospel, to hasten an expedient by way of anticipation to reconcile the disagreeing interests, and settle a revelation to be verified for ever. Jesus tells her of living water, of eternal satisfactions, of never thirsting again, of her own personal condition, of † matrimonial relation, and professes himself to be the Messiah: upon which he is interrupted by his disciples, who had returned from the city, and wondered to see him alone talking with the woman, contrary to his usual custom and reservation.

The woman, full of joy and wonder, left her water-pot, and ran to the city to publish tidings of the Messiah, and immediately the people of the city came out to see, and many believed on him upon the testimony of the woman, and more when they heard his own discourses. Then they invited him to the town; and though (Matt. x. 5.) he forbade his disciples at that time to go into any city of the Samaritans (that they might make the Jews see they were his peculiar care at that time), yet to shew that the gospel was not their inclosure, he himself now stays two days with the Samaritans, who received him with hospitable civilities.

The Jews accuse the Samaritans of two pieces of idolatry, which, say they, were committed by them in this place. The first, that they there worshipped the image of a dove: and the other, that they paid divine adoration to certain teraphim, or idol gods, there hid under the mountain. For the first charge, they took the handle from the idolatry of the Assyrians: for that people having worshipped one of their deities (Semiramis, saith Diodorus Siculus) under the image of a dove, they reproached the Samaritans as worshippers of the like image, because descended from them; and perhaps they were so while they worshipped their gods with the God of Israel, but never afterwards. And as to the second charge, Jacob, having found out that Rachel had stolen her father's teraphim, or idol gods, took them from her, and buried them under the oak in Shechem, which they suppose to have been at the foot of the mountain Gerizim; and from hence, because the Samaritans worshipped God in that mountain, the Jews suggest that they worshipped there for the sake of these idols, and paid divine adoration to them. But both these charges were malicious calumnies, falsely imputed to them: for, after Manasseh brought the law of Moses among them, and instructed them in it, the Samaritans became as zealous worshippers of the true God, and as great abhorers of all manner of idolatry, as the most rigorous Jews themselves, and so continue even to this day.

The Rev. Mr. Maundrell visited Shechem, among many other places, in his journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem. What he says of the place, and his conversation with

* The ground of this quarrel was this. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, Salmanasser, king of Assyria, sacked Samaria, transported the Israelites to Assyria, and planted an Assyrian colony in Samaria; which colony being destroyed by divine vengeance, the king thought the cause was their not serving the God of Israel, and therefore sent a Jewish captive priest to instruct the remaining Assyrians in the Jewish religion, notwithstanding they still retained the Gentile superstitions, till Manasses, the brother of Jaddi the high-priest at Jerusalem, married the daughter of Sanballat. Manasses being reprov'd for marrying the daughter of an uncircumcised Gentile, and admonished to dismiss her, flies to Samaria, persuades his father-in-law to build a temple on mount Gerizim, introduces the rites of daily sacrifice, and makes himself high-priest, pretends to be the true successor of Aaron, and commences a schism in the time of Alexander the Great. Hence the question of religion grew so high, that where-ever a Jew and Samaritan met, it occasioned great animosities, which often terminated in bloodshed or murder.

† When our Saviour had bid the woman of Samaria to call her husband, she answered, "I have no husband;" and the translators make our Saviour approve her answer, by replying, "Thou hast well said, I have no husband." But Erasmus, and others, have very judiciously observed, that this is an ironical way of speaking, which is so far from approving what one says, that, on the contrary, it represents it absurd and ridiculous. The words then ought to be rendered, 'Finely answered indeed! I have no husband,' &c.

the high-priest of the Samaritans, is worth inserting, as it will farther illustrate our subject:-----“Naplofa, says he, is the ancient Shechem, or Sychar, as it is termed in the New Testament. It stands in a narrow valley, between mount Gerizim on the south, and Ebal on the north, being built at the foot of the former; for so the situation, both of the city and mountains, is laid down by Josephus. Gerizim (says he) hangs over Shechem. Moses commanded to erect an altar toward the east, not far from Shechem, between mount Gerizim on the right-hand (that is, to one looking eastward, on the south), and Ebal on the left (that is, on the north): which so plainly assign the position of these two mountains, that it may be wondered how Geographers should come to differ so much about it: or for what reason Adrichomius should place them both on the same side of the valley Shechem. From mount Gerizim, God commanded the blessings to be pronounced upon the children of Israel; and from mount Ebal, the curses. Upon the former, the Samaritans, whose chief residence is here at Shechem, have a small temple or place of worship; to which they are still wont to repair, at certain seasons, for performance of the rites of their religion. What these rites are, I could not certainly learn; but that their religion consists in the adoration of a calf, as the Jews give out, seems to have more of spite than of truth in it.

“Upon one of these mountains also it was, that God commanded the children of Israel to set up great stones plaistered over, and inscribed with the body of their law; to erect an altar, and to offer sacrifices, feasting, and rejoicing before the Lord. But now whether Gerizim or Ebal was the place appointed for this solemnity, there is some cause to doubt. The Hebrew pentateuch, and ours from it, assigns mount Ebal for this use; but the Samaritans ascribe it to Gerizim. Our company halting a little while at Naplofa, I had an opportunity to go and visit the chief priest of the Samaritans, in order to discourse with him about this and some other difficulties occurring in the pentateuch: which were recommended to me to be inquired about by the learned Monsr. Job Ludolphus, author of the *Æthiopic history*, when I visited him at Franckfort, in my passage through Germany.

“As for the difference between the Hebrew and Samaritan copy before cited; the priest pretended the Jews had maliciously altered their text, out of odium to the Samaritans; putting for Gerizim, Ebal, upon no other account but only because the Samaritans worshipped in the former mountain, which they would have, for that reason, not to be the true place appointed by God for his worship and sacrifice. To confirm this, he pleaded that Ebal was the mountain of cursing, and in its own nature an unpleasant place: but, on the contrary, Gerizim was the mountain of blessing by God's own appointment, and also in itself fertile and delightful: from whence he inferred a probability that this latter must have been the true mountain appointed for those religious festivals, and not (as the Jews have corruptly written it) Ebal. We observed it to be in some measure true, that which he pleaded concerning the nature of both mountains; for though neither of the mountains has much to boast of as to their pleasantness, yet as one passes between them, Gerizim seems to discover a somewhat more verdant fruitful aspect than Ebal. The reason of which may be, because fronting toward the north, it is sheltered from the heat of the sun by its own shade: whereas Ebal looking southward, and receiving the sun that comes directly upon it, must by consequence be rendered more scorched and unfruitful. The Samaritan priest could not say that any of those great stones, which God directed Joshua to set up, were now to be seen in mount Gerizim; which, were they now extant, would determine the question clearly on his side. This priest shewed me a copy of the Samaritan pentateuch, but would not be persuaded to part with it upon any consideration. He had likewise the first volume of the English polyglot, which he seemed to esteem equally with his own manuscript.

“Naplofa is at present in a very mean condition, in comparison of what it is represented to have been antiently. It consists chiefly of two streets lying parallel, under mount Gerizim; but it is full of people, and the seat of a bassa. The valley between Gerizim and Ebal is not above a furlong broad. We saw on our right hand, just with-

out the city, a small mosque, said to have been built over the sepulchre, purchased by Jacob of Emmor, the father of Shechem: it goes by the name of Joseph's sepulchre, his bones having been here interred, after their transportation out of Egypt.

"At about one third of an hour's journey from Naplofa we came to Jacob's well, famous not only upon account of its author, but much more for that memorable conference which our blessed Saviour here had with the woman of Samaria. If it should be questioned whether this be the very well that it is pretended for, or no (seeing it may be suspected to stand too remote from Sychar, for women to come so far to draw water): it is answered, that probably the city extended farther this way in former times than it does now, as may be conjectured from some pieces of a very thick wall, still to be seen not far from hence. Over the well there stood formerly a large church; erected by that great and devout patroness of the holy land, the empress Helena: but of this the voracity of time, assisted by the hands of the Turks, has left nothing but a few foundations remaining. The well is covered at present with an old stone vault; into which you are let down through a very strait hole; and then removing a broad flat stone, you discover the mouth of the well itself. It is dug in a firm rock, and contains about three yards in diameter, and thirty-five feet in depth; five of which we found full of water. This confutes a fabulous story (commonly told to travellers, who do not take the pains to examine the well), that it is dry all the year round, except on the anniversary of that day on which our blessed Saviour sat upon it; but then bubbles up with abundance of water.

"At this well the narrow valley of Shechem ends; opening itself into a wide field, which is probably that spot of ground given by Jacob to his son Joseph. It is watered with a fresh stream, rising between it and Shechem; which makes it so exceeding verdant and fruitful, that it may well be looked upon as a standing token of the tender affection of that good patriarch to the best of sons." This account by Mr. Maundrell is the same in many particulars with that before given; and they both of them agree extremely well with the landscape given us by the Evangelist, in his history of our Lord's coming to this place. We would only take notice, that our modern traveller is a little too free, in making it a matter of doubt whether Ebal or Gerizim was the mount on which God commanded an altar to be erected, since the Hebrew text determines it plainly to be the former, and since the Samaritans have made evident interpolations in other places of their pentateuch. There is no doubt indeed but that the Samaritans of this day believe themselves to be in the right, as much as the Jews; but the ancient history of that people sufficiently proves, that when they first took upon them a profession of the Jewish religion, they did it, only to serve a turn, and were far from being influenced by that sincerity and zeal which have since appeared in their posterity.

The Samaritans, at their first coming into the land of the ten tribes, worshipped not the God of Israel, but the gods of the nations from whence they came. Wherefore, he sent lions amongst them, which slew them; which they apprehending to be because they knew not the worship of the God of the country, they desired that some of the captived priests might be sent to them, to teach them the manner and rites of his worship: which being accordingly done, they thenceforth worshipped the Lord, yet feared their own gods too, and so mingled things which ought not to be mingled.

They continued in this medley till towards the end of the Persian monarchy; when Manasseh married the daughter of Sanballat, then governor of Samaria; for which being expelled from Jerusalem by Nehemiah, he fled to Sanballat his father-in-law; and, after his example, many other of the Jews having married strange wives likewise, betook themselves thither also. Sanballat willingly entertains them, and makes his son-in-law Manasseh their high-priest: and when Alexander the Great subdued the Persian monarchy, he obtained leave of him to build a temple upon Mount Gerizim; where his son-in-law exercised the office of high-priest, as before related. By this means, the Samaritans were brought at length to cast off all their false gods, and to worship the God of Israel only: yet so, say the authors of the following exposition, that howsoever they seemed to themselves to be altogether free from idolatry, they nevertheless retained a smack

a smack thereof, inasmuch as they worshipped the true God under the visible representation of a dove, and circumcised their children in the name thereof. In this distinction lies the whole argument: as to the Samaritans actually worshipping a dove, we have already refuted that opinion; and we shall also see by-and-by that it is not probable that they worshipped God under the bodily representation either of a dove, or of any other creature. But to proceed:

This, say they, was the condition of the Samaritan religion in our Saviour's time: and if we weigh the matter well, we shall find his words here to the woman very applicable to be construed with reference thereto. 'You ask (saith he) of the true place of worship, whether Mount Gerizim, or Jerusalem; which is not so greatly material, forasmuch as the time is at hand when men shall worship the Father at neither: but there is a greater difference between you and us than that of place, though you take no notice of it; namely, about the object of worship itself; "For ye worship what ye know not, but we (Jews) worship what we know." Ye worship indeed the Father, the God of Israel, as we do; but you worship him under a bodily representation; wherein you shew that you know him not. "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth:" in spirit, that is, conceiving of him no otherwise than in spirit; and in truth, that is, not under any corporeal or visible shape; "For God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth;" that is, not fancying him to be a body, but, as indeed he is, a spirit.

This interpretation is ingenious enough, were it well founded: but it is not so. For to that which we have before said, to prove that the Samaritans did not make a dove the object of their worship, we may add, that there is no ground to believe that there ever was such a thing as the image of a dove erected on Mount Gerizim. The Samaritans were as sensible as the Jews that God was a spirit, invisible and incomprehensible, and consequently not to be represented under a bodily shape. All the ground that there is for the contrary opinion, is no more than this, that the Jewish doctors assert it without any proof; only one of them says, that he is fully persuaded of it. But is this enough to persuade any body else, especially any one who knows what idle stuff these men have given us for facts? In this state of the case, the former exposition of the passage under consideration is certainly to be preferred, if it were only for these three reasons: 1. Because it is more literal and obvious than the other, and makes our Saviour's answer come directly to the woman's question, as we have shewn above. 2. It carries the meaning of our Saviour's words much farther, and gives them a turn more agreeable to the spiritual nature of the gospel: there is not a sense strong enough in these expressions to conceive of him as of a spirit, and not as under a bodily shape: and, 3. This was the interpretation put upon the place by the ancient fathers. We have already quoted Eusebius; to him we will associate Origen, who says, that the words "in spirit and truth" signify, 'not with any carnal sacrifices, but with spiritual worship, or with those spiritual sacrifices which are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.' Not in types, as St. Peter expresses it, but according to the truth contained in them; for "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." And this sense had the ancient Jews themselves of the pure worship of God, as we may learn from Philo, who says, 'he brings to God the true worship, who brings truth, the simple and only sacrifice; not he who uses washings and purgations of body, but defiles his soul, or who builds and adorns temples, and offers hecatombs upon the altar: for he errs from the way of piety, as thinking outward worship is to be preferred to holiness.' Nay, the very heathens were acquainted with this notion; for they teach that 'God is to be worshipped with a pure mind, and that this is the best offering we can bring, and the best habitation we can build him.'

After John had been sent to the prison of Machæras, Jesus being, by the powerful incitation of the Holy Ghost, stirred up to the public discharge of his prophetic office, returned out of Judæa into Galilee, having by the way conversed with the woman of Sychar, as above related. His fame in the mean time was spread about all the countries through which he passed, and the neighbouring territories. And in every town he went

through he instructed the Jews in their synagogues, and preached to them the necessity of repentance and reformation of life. The substance of his declaration to them was in these or the like words: 'the days of the Messiah's appearance, so long expected and prophesied of, are now come; and God's remarkable judgments upon this whole nation, are near at hand; which there is no other way of avoiding, but by believing the gospel which I now preach, and thereby becoming partakers of the benefits of my kingdom.' This he delivered in the synagogues of Galilee, where he was greatly admired by all that heard him.

Having visited several cities of that country, he came at last to Nazareth, the place where he had been educated; and, according to his usual custom, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read some lesson out of the prophets, agreeable to the practice of the Jews. The minister of the synagogue, upon this motion, delivered him the book, or roll, of the prophet Isaiah; which turning over, or unfolding, he happened upon the place where it is thus written: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And when he had read these words, he closed the book, and restored it to the minister, and sat down; mean while the eyes of all those that were in the synagogue were fixed on him. And as he sat, he began to preach to them concerning the Messiah, telling them, that "this day that prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled."

All that heard him were amazed at the singular gracefulness of his speech, and expressed their wonder at the power and wisdom with which he delivered himself. "Is not this (said they) the son of Joseph the carpenter?" for their being acquainted with the meanness of his education, made them the more inquisitive whence he had acquired so much learning as he seemed to discover. However, they gave no credit to the miracles they had heard of, because they never saw him perform any in their presence. Which Jesus perceiving, he addressed himself to them in this manner: 'I know you are ready to object to me this proverb, which is usually cast on pretenders in physic, by way of irony, "Physician, heal thyself;" that is to say, if I would be esteemed a prophet among those who know me, I ought to shew some miracles in my own country also, especially in the place where I have been educated, as I have done in other parts, particularly at Capernaum. But you are to take notice, that no prophet hath ever been received by his own countrymen with that honour which was due to him, and that there are very few who deserve so great a favour as to have miracles wrought amongst them. There were doubtless many poor widows amongst the Jews in the days of Elias, when there had been no rain for three years and an half together, and a terrible famine raged over all the land of Palestine: nevertheless, the prophet was sent to one poor widow only, and she an inhabitant of Sarepta, in the territory of the Sidonians. So also, in the time of Eliseus the prophet, there were many Jews infected with a leprosy; yet only Naaman a Syrian was healed by him of that disease. In like manner, the inhabitants of Capernaum, and the remote and dark parts of Palestine, are to have the benefit of being eye-witnesses of my miracles, whilst you are denied that privilege.'

The Nazarenes were greatly enraged by this speech of Jesus; it plainly appearing from thence, that he looked upon them as a people of very little true religion, who would have no regard to any of God's prophets, and consequently were unworthy of having any miracles performed among them. Hereupon, they unanimously rose up, and hurried him away to the brow of the hill upon which the city of Nazareth was built, intending to cast him down headlong from it. But Jesus, upon this occasion, exerted his divine power, and, becoming on a sudden invisible to them, he passed through the midst of the multitude, no man knowing in what manner he had escaped out of their hands. After this, he went into the other parts of Galilee, where he was more kindly entertained; there being many in that country who were present at Jerusalem during the time of the preceding passover, where they had seen the miracles which Jesus wrought, particularly that of purging the temple.

In this progress, coming to Cana, the place where he had some time before turned water into wine, a certain officer of Herod the tetrarch, who had heard of his return out of Judæa into Galilee, came unto him, and desired that he would go with him to Capernaum, and heal his son, who lay there dangerously ill. The same request was likewise put to him by the rest of the Jews, who would scarcely believe on him upon any other testimony than that of miracles. This made Jesus upbraid them, saying, "Unless I work repeated signs and wonders directly before your eyes, you will not believe; whereas you ought to give credit to those who have been witnesses of my former miracles, and also to my doctrine, and the testimony of John the Baptist concerning me." But the officer continued to press him still more vehemently to go along with him, urging the necessity of making haste, because his son was just at the point of death: and Jesus was at last prevailed upon by his importunity to bid him return to Capernaum, with full assurance that his son was recovered.

The man hereupon went homewards full of joy, believing that what Jesus had said unto him was true; as he soon after found: for by the way, when he was not far from the city, his servants met him, and brought him the agreeable news of his son's recovery. The father then asked them at what time he began to mend, and they told him that about the seventh hour the fever left him; which was the very hour when Jesus told him his son was recovered. Convinced by this extraordinary proof, the officer, with all his family, believed that Jesus was the Messiah, whom God had promised to send into the world. This, St. John tells us, was the second miracle that Jesus wrought after his return out of Judæa into Galilee: for the first was his miraculous escape out of the hands of his townsmen, the Nazarenes, as above related. The change of water into wine, though it was performed at the same town of Cana, is not here to be reckoned, because it was done before he went up to the passover at Jerusalem.

After this, Jesus wholly forsook his habitation at Nazareth, because of the unworthiness of its citizens, and took up his residence at Capernaum, where dwelt the officer whose son he had cured. This place was situated on the confines of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphthalim, near the lake of Gennefareth; and, on account of our Lord's dwelling here, what was said by the prophet Isaiah concerning it, on another occasion, received a more full and proper application: "The land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphthalim, by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined:" for the divine light of Christ's doctrine expelled the ignorance of many of the Galileans; it being customary for him to go into the synagogue every sabbath-day, and instruct the people, who were filled with admiration at his doctrine; for he did not preach to them after the manner of the doctors of the law, who supported what they taught with the traditionary authority of their ancestors only; but he spoke as one endued with divine power, and who delivered every thing he said from the immediate dictates of God. And from this time (John being still detained in prison) Jesus began to urge the necessity of repentance among the Jews with greater vehemence, and plainly to declare unto them, that the heavenly kingdom of the Messiah was near at hand.

An Account of Synagogue Worship.

IT is a common saying among the Jews, that where there is no book of the law, there can be no synagogue; so the reason of the thing proves it. For the main service of the synagogue being the reading of the law to the people, consequently, where there was no book of the law to be read, there certainly could be no synagogue: but how rare the book of the law was through all Judah before the Babylonish captivity, many texts of scripture tell us. When Jehoshaphat sent teachers through all Judah, to instruct the people in the law of God, they carried a book of the law with them; which they needed not to have done, if there had been any copies of the law in those cities to which they went; and certainly there would have been some, had there then been

been any synagogues in them; it being the same absurdity to suppose a Jewish synagogue without a copy of the law, as it would with us to suppose a parish church without a Bible.

The service to be performed in these synagogue assemblies were prayers, reading the scriptures, and preaching and expounding upon them.

First, for their prayers they have liturgies, in which are all the prescribed forms of their synagogue-worship. These at first were very few, but they are since increased into a very large bulk; which makes their synagogue-service very long and tedious; and the rubric, by which they regulate it, is very perplexed and intricate, and incumbered with many rites and ceremonious observances; in all which they equal, if not exceed, both the superstition and also the length of the Popish service. The most solemn part of their prayers are those which they call the eighteen prayers: these, they say, were composed and instituted by Ezra, and the great synagogue; and to them rabbi Gamaliel, a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, added the nineteenth against the christians, who are therein meant under the names of the apostates and heretics.

The second part of their synagogue-service is the reading of the scriptures, which is of three sorts; 1st, the Kiriath Shema; 2dly, the reading of the law; and, 3dly, the reading of the prophets: of all these we shall here treat in order.

1. The Kiriath Shema consists in the reading of three portions of scripture. The first of these portions is from the beginning of the fourth verse of the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, to the end of the ninth verse; the second, from the beginning of the thirteenth verse of the eleventh chapter of Deuteronomy, to the end of the twenty-first verse; and the third, from the beginning of the thirty-seventh verse of the fifteenth chapter of Numbers, to the end of the chapter. And because the first of these portions in the Hebrew Bible begins with the word Shema, that is, Hear, they call all these three together the Shema, and the reading of them Kiriath Shema, that is, the reading of the Shema.

2. The five books of the law are divided into fifty-four sections, because, in their intercalated years (a month being added) there were fifty-four sabbaths, and on each of these sabbaths one of those sections was read. On other years they reduced them to the number of the sabbaths which were in these years, by joining two short ones into one: for they held themselves obliged to have the whole law thus read over in their synagogues every year.

3. Till the time of the persecution by Antiochus Epiphanes, they read only the law: but then being forbidden to read it any more, in the room of the fifty-four sections of the law they substituted fifty-four sections out of the Prophets, the reading of which they ever after continued.

The times of their synagogue-service were three days in a week, besides their holidays, whether fasts or festivals; and thrice on every one of those days; that is, in the morning, in the afternoon, and at night. Their ordinary synagogue days in every week, were Monday, Thursday, and Saturday. Saturday was their sabbath, the day set apart among them for religious exercises by divine appointment; and the other two by the appointment of the elders; so that three days might not pass without the public reading of the law among them. The reason which they give for this, is taken from their mystical interpretation of the law: for whereas we find it said that the Israelites were in great distress on their travelling three days in the wilderness without water; by water, they tell us, is there mystically meant the law, and therefore, for this reason, they ought not to be three days together without the hearing of it; consequently, for the avoiding hereof, they have ordained, that it be publicly read in their synagogues thrice every week. And their manner of doing it is as followeth: the whole law, or five books of Moses, being divided into as many sections or lessons as there are weeks in their year, as hath been shewn before, on Monday they began with that which was proper for that week, and read it half through; and on Thursday proceeded to read the remainder: on Saturday, which was their solemn sabbath, they read all over again, from the beginning to the end of the said lesson, or section; and this both morning

and evening. On the week days they read it only in the morning, but on the sabbath they read it in the evening as well as in the morning, for the sake of labourers and artificers, who could not leave their work to attend the synagogues on the week days, that so all might hear twice every week the whole section or lesson of that week read unto them. And when the reading of the prophets was added to that of the law, they observed the same order in it.

As the synagogue-service was to be on three days every week, for the sake of their hearing the law; so it was to be thrice on those days, for the sake of their prayers: for it was a constant rule among them, that all were to pray to God three times every day, that is, at the times of morning and evening sacrifice, and at the beginning of the night; because till then the evening sacrifice was still left burning upon the altar.

As to the ministration of the synagogue-service, it was not confined to the sacerdotal order. The priests were consecrated to the service of the temple, which was quite of another nature, as consisting only in the offering up of sacrifices and oblations. At the time indeed of the morning and evening sacrifices, the Levites and other singers sung psalms of praise unto God before the altar; and in the conclusion the priests blessed the people; which may seem to bear some resemblance to what was done in the synagogue. But in all other particulars the public synagogue-service was wholly different from the public service of the temple; and any one that by learning was qualified for it, of what tribe soever he were, was admitted to the administration. But, that order might be preserved, there were in every synagogue some fixed ministers to take care of the religious duties to be performed in it; and these were, by imposition of hands, solemnly admitted thereto. The first were the elders of the synagogue, who governed all the affairs of it, and directed all the duties of religion therein to be performed. These are in the scriptures of the New Testament called "rulers of the synagogue." How many of these were in every synagogue, is no where said: but this is certain, there were more than one; for they are mentioned in scripture in the plural number, in respect of the same synagogue; and at Corinth, Crispus and Sosthenes are both said to be chief rulers of the synagogue, though it is not likely that there was more than one synagogue in that city.

They who think synagogues to have been before the Babylonish captivity, alledge for it what is said in the 74th Psalm, verse the eighth: "They have burnt up all the synagogues of God in the land." But the original words signify, "all the assemblies of God," by which must indeed be understood the places where the people assembled to worship God. But this doth not infer that those places were synagogues; and there are none of the ancient versions, excepting that of Aquila, which so render this passage.

And if it be examined into, how it came to pass that the Jews were so prone to idolatry before the Babylonish captivity, and so strongly and cautiously, even to superstition, fixed against it after that captivity; the true reason hereof will appear to be, that they had the law and the prophets every week constantly read to them after that captivity, which they had not before: for before that captivity, they having no synagogues for public worship or public instruction, nor any places to resort to for either, except the temple at Jerusalem, or the cities of the Levites, or to the prophets, when God was pleased to send such among them; for want hereof great ignorance grew among the people: God was little known among them, and his laws were in a manner wholly forgotten.

CHAPTER V.

A GENERAL DEFENCE OF OUR LORD'S MIRACLES, BY THE ANCIENT FATHERS. AN ACCOUNT OF TWO INFAMOUS PUBLICATIONS. SOME PARTICULAR OBJECTIONS MADE BY THE ENEMIES OF CHRISTIANITY AGAINST THE MIRACLE OF TURNING WATER INTO WINE.

BEING now come to the miracles of our blessed Lord, which he wrought for the confirmation of his Messiahship, it is necessary, before we proceed, to consider the nature of a miracle in general, and what authority is sufficient to convince us that a

miracle is true. This will be found not only a necessary preface to a particular vindication of those miracles of our Lord, which have been separately objected to, but also a general guide in our forming a judgment of all the rest, and in our distinguishing those wrought by him and his disciples, from the tricks of impostors.

The words miracle, sign, and wonder, are, in scripture, generally synonymous; and signify some action, event, or effect, which is superior to the general and known laws of nature; and, according to this definition, the name is applied not only to the true miracles wrought by saints, by prophets sent from God, by good angels, by our blessed Lord, or by the immediate finger of God, but also to the false miracles of impostors, to wonders wrought by wicked men, by false prophets, or by devils. And therefore Jesus Christ commands us to examine miracles, and those who perform them: "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not; for there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and great wonders, inasmuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." And Moses says, "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign and a wonder, and the sign and the wonder cometh to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul." It may therefore be affirmed, that the proof of miracles is not always certain, but sometimes equivocal. How then shall we distinguish the true from the false? To the miracles of any one who sets up for a person sent from God, must be added purity of doctrine, innocence of life, a firm understanding, and a concurrence with those whose doctrine and mission have been already approved. His miracles must be strictly examined, to see if they are true ones, and not juggling tricks, or magical operations; also whether they lead us to God, to peace, to righteousness, and to salvation.

And since this is the case with respect to Jesus Christ, and his miracles, the advice of a right reverend prelate is excellent, when, among other rules which he gives to his people to preserve them from the infection of infidelity, he expresses himself thus: 'Let your chief regard and attention be to the testimony of miracles, those mighty works, which were wrought by Christ and his apostles. For this is in its nature a most sure, plain, and easy proof, which the meanest capacities are capable of apprehending and entering into; and which, therefore, was evidently intended to be the principal means of convincing all mankind of the truth of Christianity. To deny that our Saviour wrought many and great miracles, on all occasions, during the course of his ministry, is to deny the evidence of sense, and to destroy, at once, the truth of all history whatsoever; and, in this respect, is to deny that which the worst enemies of christianity of old had not the hardness to deny.'

It is true, that a miracle of itself proves nothing, unless this only, that there is a cause equal to the effect we see. Suppose you should see a man raise one from the dead, and he should go away and say nothing to you, you would not find that any fact was proved by this miracle: but should he declare to you, in the name of him by whose authority the miracle was wrought, that image-worship was unlawful, you would then be possessed of a proof against image-worship. But how? Not because the miracle proves any thing as to the point itself, but because the man's declaration is authorised by him who wrought the miracle in confirmation of his doctrine. And therefore miracles are directly a proof of the authority of persons, though not of the truth of things.

Upon this foundation only the miracles of Jesus Christ prove all that is necessary, and all that ever he required mankind to believe concerning him. That he was a teacher of extraordinary abilities, that his doctrine was pure and divine, that his life was innocent and holy, these are the points that his greatest enemies never pretended to dispute. With all these qualifications, he called himself the Son of God, the Messiah spoken of by the prophets, who was to introduce a new dispensation and state of things. All that was here wanted, and that the Jews ever demanded of him, was the concurrent testimony of

of the Divine Being, manifested in visible signs and wonders, in such a manner, and upon such subjects, that the prejudices, obstinacy, and incredulity of the Jews, must have been very extraordinary, in that they did not all surrender to the evidence of them. "When Christ himself cometh," said they, "will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?"

Here we have, from their own confession, an assurance that they had sufficient reason to receive Jesus for the Messiah. And we find, says the prelate quoted above, that Christ many times appeals to his own works, or to the miracles wrought by him, as the most convincing testimonies of his coming from God. Nor does Christ only appeal to his works, but he grounds the great guilt of the Jews who rejected him, on their having seen his works, and yet not been convinced by them: "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin."

These appeals which our Saviour makes to his miracles, together with the immediate convictions wrought by them, are joint testimonies of the propriety and efficacy of the argument drawn from thence: and since miracles could be no testimony at all, if they were not true and real, those appeals and convictions are of themselves sufficient to shew the vanity and absurdity of those who have taken a great deal of pains to prove the miracles of our Saviour merely allegorical; in which it is hard to persuade one's self that the authors, if in their senses, were in earnest; and, for that reason, it might seem trifling to refute arguments in favour of a manifest absurdity. What less than Omnipotence could restore a withered hand, give sight to one born blind, or raise the dead to life, and that by the touch of his finger, or even of his garment, or by a mere word spoken either when he was absent or present? As to the objection, that there are beings in the spiritual world capable of performing things above the power of men, it is justly answered, that no created beings, who, in consequence of their creation, must be agents of a limited power, are capable of performing such proper and real miracles as those of Christ were, independently of God, since, great as their power is, it is not infinite, and therefore cannot perform those operations which, either as to the matter or manner of them, require omnipotence.

Hence it evidently follows, that since real miracles are incapable of being performed by any but God, or agents commissioned by him, they who, in proof of their authority as derived from God, perform miraculous actions for good ends, justly demand the assent of men who either are personal spectators of them, or are informed of them by credible testimonies.

The earliest apologist, of whose writings any thing concerning the miracles of our Lord now remains, was Quadratus, an immediate disciple of the apostles, who, in an apology presented to the emperor Adrian, about the year of Christ 123, has these words: 'The works of our Saviour were always visible and conspicuous. They that were cured of their diseases, and they that were raised from the dead, were not only seen by all when they were cured, and had risen again, but afterwards were always present. They not only appeared whilst our Saviour was upon earth, but they lived long after his departure from it; so that some of those very persons have continued in being even till our own times.'

The next eminent apologist is Justin Martyr, who, in his first apology to Antoninus Pius, about 140 years after Christ, writes to this effect: 'We cannot but believe what was foretold of Christ's miracles; because we see with our own eyes, or know, by the ocular evidence of other credible persons, that those wonderful works have been wrought, and are now performed, as they were foretold; which, we believe, will appear even to you the greatest and most certain demonstration. Likewise, in the same apology, he mentions again the ancient prophecies concerning Christ's curing all manner of diseases, and raising persons from the dead, inculcating also, that he actually did such things, and appealing to the acts of Pilate for the confirmation thereof.

Tertullian, another apologist, a person of extraordinary parts and learning, is very express for a literal interpretation of the scripture, and particularly of the miracles of our Lord, as related in the Gospels. This fully appears from his Apologetic, composed in the reign

reign of Alexander Severus, near 200 years after Christ, in which he writes thus: 'That person, whom the Jews vainly imagined, from the meanness of his appearance, to be a mere man, they afterwards, in consequence of the power he exerted, considered as an uncommon person, when he with one word ejected devils out of the bodies of men, gave sight to the blind, cleansed the leprous, strengthened the nerves of those that had the palsy, and with one command restored the dead to life; when he made the very elements obey him, assuaged the storms, walked upon the seas, demonstrating himself to be the Word of God.' And again, speaking of the passion of Jesus, he says, 'In the same moment the day itself withdrew, when the sun was in its meridian height. Those persons thought it to be an eclipse, who did not know that such a darkness was foretold concerning Christ. Others have denied the fact, as being ignorant of the true reason of it; and yet you have that great event which happened, recorded in your own archives.' Pilate sent an account of all those things that happened with regard to Christ, to Tiberius, the then Roman emperor.

There are several passages more to the same purpose, in other writings of this apologist, and those very emphatical ones, but too long to be transcribed. In one place, after assigning several instances of ancient prophecies relating to the birth, sufferings, and death of Christ, he goes on thus: 'What figures are to be found in Isaiah! what images in David! what prophetic mysteries in Jeremiah! who have not so much as spoken of his miracles in a parabolical manner? And then, running over several of our Lord's miraculous cures, he says, 'Which things, though I myself have been accustomed to interpret in a spiritual manner, by their analogy with moral cures, yet since these prophecies have been fulfilled in the bodily and literal sense, they evince that the prophets foretold things of both kinds; but with this salvo, that there are more expressions in their writings clear of all allegorical cloud, than there are of a mystical nature.' Of which literal sense he gives several instances, and says, that these things want a little review, rather than an interpretation.

Arnobius, who wrote in defence of the christian religion under Dioclesian, about the year of Christ 300, is very clear and copious in apologizing for the reality of our Lord's miracles in their plain and literal sense. After proving that the wonderful works of our Lord cannot with the least shew of reason be imputed to magic; and that no magician that ever appeared in the world could perform the thousandth part of what he did, and also that they were little mischievous things that had been wrought by the most eminent magicians; he at length breaks out into so holy as well as rhetorical a rapture on Christ's performances, that it is scarce capable of being translated with justice. He there mentions most of the miraculous facts recorded in the gospel, in their literal and obvious sense, yet with the greatest transport imaginable; enlarging much on the wonderful gift of tongues, the speedy propagation of the religion of Jesus throughout the world, and his communication of the same power to others that he had exercised himself. The reason he gives for our Lord's performing so many miracles, is worth inserting, namely, 'That these things were really performed by Jesus, not to gratify a vain ostentation of power, but that the most incredulous persons might be convinced that his doctrine and promises were true (or that what was promised in ancient prophecies was really fulfilled in him), and that they might likewise be informed, by the beneficial tendency and goodness of the works he wrought, what is the nature of the true God.'

Lactantius naturally follows his master Arnobius. He wrote, or began to write, his divine institutions, both against paganism, and by way of apology for christianity, during the persecution of Licinius, in the year 320. In the fourth book of this work he writes, 'That from the time of his baptism Jesus began to exert the greatest power imaginable: not by magical tricks and illusions, which, with all their boasts, have nothing true and solid in them; but by an heavenly operation: which works of his were long foretold by the prophets; and were indeed so very numerous, that they cannot all be comprised in one volume.' He then runs over the heads of our Lord's miraculous cures, and afterwards observes, 'That he performed all these mighty works not by any manual operation, or medicinal remedy, but by his mere word and command.' 'Neither is it to be wondered at,' says this father, 'that with one word he wrought such miracles, since he was the Word of God, and was endued with divine power. Neither was it thought sufficient for

for him to give strength to the weak, soundness to the maimed, and health to the diseased, unless he had raised even the dead as if they were awakened out of sleep, and called them back again to life. Which works of his when the Jews saw, they pretended indeed that they were performed by a diabolical power, though their own prophecies mentioned that all these things should be so performed, as in fact they were. After this, Lactantius cites a passage from Isaiah, and relates pretty largely the circumstances of two or three of our Lord's miracles, but it would be superfluous to transcribe any more from him, since what is already introduced sufficiently proves that he understood the gospels in a literal sense.

To the apologists already cited, might be added the testimony of Eusebius, in the beginning of the fourth century, who has given us a long catalogue of Christ's miraculous facts, which, he says, were celebrated every where, and even received and assented to by himself after mature deliberation and exact enquiry into their credibility, and were therefore considered by him as solid proofs of the divinity of the Author of them. But there is no need to repeat from Eusebius what has been already quoted from other fathers, it being certain, that the passages here transcribed will be more than sufficient to prove, that none of the fathers excluded a literal interpretation of the gospel history.

It has not been denied indeed that many of the fathers did, in fact, interpret scripture in a mystical sense, but only that they never substituted the mystery in the place of the letter. To make this distinction a little clearer, it may be necessary to consider somewhat more particularly what relates to the practice of those times in interpreting scripture; and, first, to recollect whence the mystical way of interpreting was derived, that we may the better learn of what authority it is. Now there are two accounts of the original of this practice to be assigned, which perhaps will appear to have both concurred; the one is, that the christian fathers derived it from the Jewish interpreters; and the other, that they received it from the more learned Gentiles. And since there is now extant but little interpretation of scripture by way of commentary, more ancient than the days of Origen, who is therefore called the father of mystical interpreters, let us consider whence he, in particular, appears to have derived his method.

Photius, the great critic of the ancients, assures us, that Philo the Jew taught the way of allegorizing scripture to the Christians. Now it is known that Clement of Alexandria, who was Origen's master, cultivated this mystical way, which he certainly derived from Philo, whom he not only imitates but transcribes, and it is therefore presumed that Origen had it more immediately from Clement. Among the Jews, it seems to have been of greater antiquity than Philo himself; and to have been much used by the Essenes of Alexandria, whose ancient books are said to have been full of allegorical interpretations of scripture. The other account of the beginning of mystical interpretations among the christians, is that given by Porphyry, who asserts, that Origen was conversant in the writings of the stoics, and from them learned the art of allegorizing scripture, agreeable to the custom of the Greeks in explaining their mythology. 'Tis true that Origen seems to have much studied not only the stoics, but also Plato, and Numenius the Pythagorean, with other mystical writers: upon which account St. Jerom asserts, that Origen, in his Stromata, confirmed all the doctrines of our religion out of Plato, Aristotle, Numenius, and Cornutus; most of whom, with other writers of the same kind, are mentioned in the pieces of his which are now extant. This may serve for an account of the original of the allegorical method of interpreting scripture, and also to shew that Origen seems to have copied both Jewish and Gentile writers.

But we must not forget that Philo, though so great a master of this kind of interpretation, always acknowledges the reality of the facts, whenever he allegorizes any scriptural history; as for instance, when he turns into allegory several remarkable parts of Abraham's life: where he first allows the truth of what is related concerning him, and then adds a mystical exposition thereof; and accordingly, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, agree in imitating Philo, as much in acknowledging the truth of scriptural facts, as in putting mystical senses on them.

It is certain, however, after all, that Origen has frequently expressed his sentiments of

the literal sense of scripture with too little caution, and allowed himself excessive liberties in comparing it with his mystical interpretations; and since, in so doing, he has shielded himself under the authority of St. Paul, it deserves consideration, how far St Paul will defend him on this head. Now it is confessed, that this apostle has, in fact, allegorized several passages of the Jewish law and history; but then it must be considered, not only that such an accommodation of them was very agreeable to the oriental notions of that time, but also that the particular applications made by St. Paul, receive in him a great weight, because they were influenced by the same Spirit who dictated the passages thus applied; a thing which cannot be affirmed of Origen or any other father who wrote mystical expositions in imitation of this apostle. Besides, St. Paul's allegorical exposition of any passage in the Old Testament cannot support a similar exposition of the New; because the law of Moses was intirely and essentially typical of the gospel, in the dispensation of which it is fully completed; but it cannot be said of the gospel, that it is typical of any future dispensation; for the body and substance is Christ, who came once for all, whose priesthood is unchangeable, and whose ministry therefore cannot be allegorical; and as the practice of St. Paul cannot, so neither can any expression, that may be abusively cited from his writings, afford them any support who endeavour to turn the miracles of our Lord into mystery.

The use and authority of allegorical interpretations of scripture, particularly those of the New Testament, as practised by the fathers, are reducible into a narrow compass; it being an easy inference from what has been already alledged, that they subsist upon weak and precarious reasons. As to their use, we may consider it either with regard to the time when they were made, or with regard to our own time.

In ancient times, these mystical expositions, with which the homilies abounded, gave an agreeable entertainment to popular auditories, and warmly affected the imagination with a sort of spiritual wit that was then much in fashion. These exercises of wit were applied to religious subjects more particularly by Origen and Austin, who, being persons of extraordinary abilities, knew how to find out some surprising connexions of scriptural ideas, some apt similitudes, pretty allusions, and amusing mysteries in etymologies and numbers: but all this was no more than mere wit too curiously employed in sacred matters, attended with the love of making discoveries of a sublimer nature, and designed to strike strongly upon the fancy, and inflame the pious affections of the hearers. Such discourses are generally far from being judicious; as wit upon other occasions is known to join together many superficial, but bright, ideas, which it is the business of judgment to separate. However it is no more to be wondered at, that, notwithstanding the opposition made by some fathers of better judgment, such an injudicious affectation of allegories prevailed for some time, through the contagious influence of some great examples, and particularly that of Origen, then that of bishop Andrews and others, who were men of sense and learning, gave too much into the pious conceits and devout jingles that were fashionable in the pulpit in their days.

The other use of this mystical method of interpretation which regards all ages, and more especially our own, is this; that such mystical expositions of scripture, and more particularly of the miracles of our Lord, necessarily presuppose the reality of the facts that are thus allegorized. For otherwise such mystical expositions have no foundation, but are merely imaginary things. If the Mosaic law or history was allegorized, it is evident there was really such a law, and such a history: for otherwise how could the law itself be appealed to, as the ground of St. Paul's own allegory? Says he, "Do ye not hear the law?" What would the allegory of Sarah and Hagar and their sons be, if there had been no such real persons? And how was the Jewish history written for our instruction, if it did not consist of real facts that might admonish us? The same application may be made to the gospel: for what are mystical interpretations of our Saviour's miracles, but ingenious amusements, if they are not really grounded on miraculous facts? Without such a solid foundation, they unavoidably degenerate into trifles, or rather vanish into nothing. Mystical interpretations therefore of our Saviour's miracles have this use, contrary to the end for which they have been so strongly urged, that they establish the reality of those facts

facts upon which they are grounded. But the absurdity of excluding the literal sense, because a mystical one has been built upon it, was before exploded, in that excellent quotation from the bishop of London's pastoral letter, p. 62, 63.

To prove the little authority of mystical interpretations (even as they were practised by some of the fathers, without any intent to undermine the literal sense), we need only add two quotations, the one from Arnobius, a christian father; the other from Maimonides, a celebrated Jewish rabbi. Arnobius, speaking of the uncertainty of allegorical interpretations of the Pagan mythology, uses words that may as properly be turned against the patrons of mystery among christians. 'Whence it is evident to you,' says he, 'when you explain those allegories, that in your interpretations of them you have the same sentiments that the writers of the histories relating to them had in their own thoughts, and which they did not express in words suitable to their proper sense, but to figurative significations. Another mystical interpreter may fancy a more probable and ingenious sense than yourselves; a third may discover another meaning; a fourth a different one from all three; and, according to the qualifications of the several interpreters, every thing may be explained with an infinite number of pretended expositions: for since all allegories are taken from things that are dark and concealed, and do not aim at any certain end that can immoveably fix one's opinion of the thing itself which is treated of, every one is at liberty to affirm his own conjectures to have been originally designed. And if this be the case of allegories, how can you draw any thing certain from what is uncertain in itself; and assign to it any one unalterable signification, when an infinite variety of expositions may be equally drawn from it?' The words of Maimonides are to this effect: 'Our rabbies are wont, as is well known to all that are acquainted with their usual practice, to be mightily delighted with allegories, and to use them frequently; not that they are of opinion that the allegorical is the true sense of scripture, but that it has somewhat enigmatical in it that is pleasant and entertaining.' These quotations, especially the former of them, sufficiently prove how little mystical interpretations of any kind were anciently regarded by the judicious. To what purpose, then, is the practice of the fathers brought as an argument on this occasion? The fathers of the apostolical age, or those who lived soon after it, are, indeed, proper witnesses of the truth of the miraculous facts of Jesus Christ, and likewise of the authority of those books that recorded them. The fathers of the three first centuries are competent witnesses of the miracles that were then wrought in the church, and some of them of the gifts of the Spirit that were then continued; in such instances as these, their testimony should be depended on, as they were learned and sincere persons: but their particular methods of instruction need not therefore be drawn into precedents, much less should they be brought to prove what was never intended by them.

Having treated thus largely upon miracles in general, and not only distinguished those of our Lord and his apostles from the tricks of impostors, but also established the history of them in its plain and literal sense, we now proceed to take notice of two vile but singular publications on this subject. Mr. Basnage mentions two that are most remarkable, both published under the same title, one by Wagenfeil, the other by Huldricus. Probably the latter may not so justly be called a distinct piece, as an improvement of the former, which is here purged of some of its grossest absurdities; though at the same time new absurdities are added, and many old ones left, as we shall make appear.

Whether it be that the Jews were afraid, lest some amongst them might at last get the better of their prejudices, and, ascending to the essential characters of the Messiah as delivered by the prophets, should come to acknowledge them as visible in the person of Jesus Christ, or whether it were malice and obstinacy that influenced them, we shall not inquire; but thus much is certain, that they have endeavoured to make Jesus odious both to Jews and Christians, by disguising the actions and miracles of the Messiah whom we adore, after having read the history of them in our gospels. To this purpose, they have been labouring many ages to perfect the work above quoted, which,

which, in imitation of the beginning of St. Matthew's Gospel, they call Toldos Jeschu, or the generations of Jesus Christ; a piece which, after all the pains that have been taken with it, betrays the ignorance of its authors, and is, in fact, a most ridiculous production. This work was at first published under the name of Jonathan, a scribe of Jerusalem, contemporary with Jesus Christ; yet it speaks of Jews settled at Worms, who were called to Herod's council; which is such an anachronism as effectually lays open the whole imposture. In it are blunders also about the time when Jesus Christ was born, and about divers of their own customs; these are so very gross, that some Jewish doctors have been forced to disown the book, though composed purely for the service of their nation.

To give an idea of the work itself, we shall transcribe a short abstract of it from Mr. Bafnage. This writer says, that though they call it the Generation of Jesus, it begins with his birth, and so goes through the history of his life and death, without giving his genealogy at all. The author relates, that 'one named Pandera, living at Bethlehem, fell in love with a young tire-woman, who had been married to Jochanan. He debauched her, and had a son by her; then fled into Babylon, leaving the child upon the mother's hands, who called him Jehoschua. Being sent to school, the boy had the impudence to lift up his head, and shew his bare face before the priests; whereas it was the custom to be veiled in their presence. This boldness gave occasion to inquire after his birth, which was judged impure. After he had remained some time in Galilee, he went to Jerusalem, and resolved to steal away the name of God. But, to prevent such a theft, two lions were made by magic, and placed before the Holy of holies, one on the right-side, and the other on the left. These two lions roared every time that any one went out; and their roaring was so frightful, that it terrified those who heard it, and made them lose their memories. Jesus, the son of Pandera, escaped this snare, by cutting a hole in his skin, and slipping under it the name of Jehovah, which he had stolen in writing. He went from thence immediately to Bethlehem, the place of his birth, where, by virtue of this name, which he repeated, he raised one from the dead, and cured a leper. The noise of those miracles drew a vast multitude after him, who led him to Jerusalem, in triumph, upon an ass.

The priests, being met together, petitioned Helena, or Oliena, who at that time reigned with her son Mombas, or Hyrcanus, and demanded that Jesus might be punished. He appeared before her, and, by some new miracles, won her over to his party: at which the priests, being amazed, consulted how they might entrap him; and one of them, called Juda, offered to learn the name of Jehovah also, provided they would take upon themselves the sin which he thereby committed. They consented: he procured the name; and to working of miracles they went, both Jesus and he, by way of emulation. Both the one and the other raised himself up into the air, where Juda attempted to make his enemy fall, but in vain, till he had watered upon him; when the virtue of the name being over, they both fell to the ground, because they were both defiled. Jesus immediately washed himself in Jordan, and wrought new miracles; and Juda, who would not be balked, put himself among his disciples, observed all his proceedings, and revealed them to the sages. As Jesus was coming into the temple, they took him, with many of his disciples, whilst the rest fled to the mountains. He was now fastened to a marble pillar in the city, and there whipped; after which he was crowned with thorns; then they gave him vinegar and water to drink, because he was thirsty; and lastly, the sanhedrim having condemned him to death, he was stoned.

After he was stoned, they attempted to hang him upon wood; but the wood broke, because Jesus, foreseeing the manner of his death, had enchanted it by the name of Jehovah. However, Juda disappointed the effect of this precaution, by taking a great cabbage out of his garden, and hanging the body thereon. And now, fearing lest the disciples of Jesus should proclaim that he was risen from the dead, Juda took away his corpse from the grave, and, having diverted a running stream, he buried it in a ditch. Nevertheless, it was reported that Jesus was risen from the dead, because his body was not found in the sepulchre. Queen Helena believed it, and declared that he was the Son of God;

God; but Juda discovered the cheat, by producing the body: it was then fastened to the tail of a horse, and dragged before the palace of the queen, who was confounded because she had said that he was the Son of God. His hair was then plucked off, therefore the monks are shaved: but the Nazarites were so provoked at this, that they made a schism upon it among the Jews.

Notwithstanding this, their religion was spread abroad every where, by the ministry of twelve persons, who preached through all countries. The wise men, being mightily concerned at their progress, deputed one Simon Kepha to stop it; with him the name Jehovah transported himself into the metropolis of the Nazarites, where, after he had wrought several miracles, he engaged the people to do whatsoever he ordered them. He then forbade them to use the Jews ill, and commanded them to celebrate the festival of the stoning of Jesus, instead of the passover, and the fortieth day after his death, instead of the Pentecost. They promised to observe his directions, provided he remained among them: in order to which, they built him a tower, where he shut himself up, and lived upon bread and water six years, and then died. This tower, or at least the stone on which Simon sat, is yet to be seen at Rome, and is called Peter. Elias came afterwards to Rome, and declared that Simon had deceived them, for that he was the person whom Jesus had entrusted with his orders. He then enjoined circumcision, and commanded the observance of the first day instead of the sabbath: but at the very instant he was preaching this doctrine, a stone fell upon his head, and crushed him to pieces. May this be the end of all God's enemies! This is an extract from that famous book *Toldos Jeschu*; which is a romance, wherein some parts of the life of Christ are inserted, and others obscurely alluded to.

Some learned christians, notwithstanding their conviction of the falsehood of this piece, have yet taken part of it to ground their conjectures upon. Celsus is excusable, because a heathen, in having upbraided the christians with the story of the virgin's being forced by the soldier Pandera; but Epiphanius is much to blame, for pretending that Jacob the father of Joseph was surnamed Panther.

To refute this whole fable, and prove the ignorance of its inventors, we need only consider the inconsistencies that are obvious in one small part thereof. The birth of Jesus, which they pretend was in the reign of Alexander Jannæus, is by them placed an hundred and fifty years before the reign of Helena, queen of the Adiabeni, who, if there was any of that name, must have been the queen before whom Jesus was brought. But this queen never reigned in Judæa, nor had she any authority there; and therefore it is ridiculous to drag Jesus before her, in order to demand sentence against him from her and her son. Again, Monobasus was the name of Helena's son; but he is here called Mombas, and confounded with Hyrcanus. In a word, Jesus Christ was not born till about eighty years after the time to which they fix his birth, and was put to death forty years before the time when they make him pass through an examination before a person who never had any authority in Judæa. The taking notice of this blunder, which may be confirmed from the histories of those times, is making as much answer as the whole book deserves.

The author of the *Toldos Jeschu*, published by Huldricus, has followed the gospel closer, and, without speaking of Helena, 'makes Jesus Christ to be born in the reign of Herod: nay, he pretends that the complaints against the adulteries of Pandera and Mary were carried before this prince: and that, being exasperated against the guilty who were fled into Egypt, he went to Bethlehem, and massacred the children of that place.' This relation is in truth much more judicious than the former, but has, nevertheless, many considerable faults, of which we shall produce a few.

First, it makes Jesus to be born at the beginning of Herod's reign, and to be put to death under the same prince, who pronounces sentence against him: whereas, every body knows that Herod died immediately after the birth of Christ, who was not crucified till the reign of Tiberius, when there were no more kings in Jerusalem. These facts cannot be contradicted, because they are taken from profane history, of which our fabulous author was wholly ignorant.

Secondly, it makes Joshua the son of Perachia, who had studied under Akiba, to be the preceptor of Jesus; and yet Akiba himself did not live till the reign of Adrian, which was an hundred years after the death of Christ.

Thirdly, it affirms, that John the Baptist was a disciple of Jesus, instead of being his forerunner.

Fourthly, it talks of a war between Herod and the king of Cæsarea, about image-worship, which, it is pretended, was practised by the followers of Jesus. Where this Cæsarea lay, is what nobody can certainly tell (though the author gives room to think it was Germany), but it is certain that there was not any such war carried on at that time, neither was image-worship then introduced among christians.

Fifthly, it brings in, besides, a whole parcel of infidel kings, who designed to wage war against Israel; and says, that this was made a pretence for keeping a solemn fast, though the real design of it was to beg of God to deliver up Jesus, who, by the powerful name above-mentioned, kept himself out of their hands.

What a heap of inconsistencies are here! And yet these are but few in comparison of what might be collected from this boasted work. Is it not surprising that any man, who knew so little of the state of his own nation when Jesus lived, and of the true actions of Christ and his apostles, should yet pretend to write their history? Let the reader judge how much he is to depend upon such books as these for the characters of the blessed Jesus and his holy mother; and consequently, how impious it is to produce any passages from them, in the dispute about the miracles of our Messiah. Can an unprejudiced person be persuaded to think that these fables, which so manifestly destroy themselves, have any manner of force, when opposed to all that modesty, humility, and holiness, which appear in the true history of Mary the mother of Jesus? and whether it be not a sin against the Holy Ghost, the true author of the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ, as well as a blasphemous imputation on Jesus himself, to bring in the story of this Pandera, or Panthera, and set it against the authority of the inspired writings, is a matter worth the serious consideration of those who can give themselves such liberties.

Upon the whole, we must not dismiss this no-less-ill-grounded than wicked story, without taking notice that, notwithstanding all the inconsistent variations of the Toldos Jeschu, both in itself and in the different editions of it, the author or authors of it do expressly acknowledge, that Jesus actually performed many and great miracles, such as restoring sight to the blind, recovering confirmed paralytics, and raising the dead: for though these and other miracles are absurdly said to be wrought by the mysterious name Jehovah, the Tetragrammaton, as stolen out of the temple, yet the miraculous facts themselves are plainly confessed, though upon that false supposition; and therefore, stripping the story of that ridiculous part of it which relates to the power of a mere word, it is granted in it that Jesus performed real miracles in the name of the supreme God: so that the most virulent Jews, as well as Celsus, Mahomet, Julian the Apostate, and other infidels, are witnesses to the truth of the literal sense of Jesus's miracles. And this being so, of what service the impious insinuation concerning Panthera can be to an allegorical scheme, is hard to see: which makes it probable that this story was here produced with the same view, as it was formerly by Celsus and the Jews, not to fix another and a more sublime sense upon the actions of Christ, but to prove that Jesus himself was really an impostor, and consequently all his actions mere juggling tricks; a design that can never be reconciled with the character of a christian, to which our author so strongly pretended.

Our rabbi, on this occasion, goes on to cite St. Austin against some ancient heretics, who inferred, from this expression, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" that Mary was neither a virgin, nor Jesus her son; which, he says, gave perplexity to that father, as to the explication of this expression consistently with her virginity and his filiation. And though the rabbi calls this a quibble, yet, after so bold an insinuation, we shall set the whole, as a matter of some consequence, in a true light from St. Austin himself. That father says, that 'there were some that derogated from the truth of the

the gospel, and pretended that Jesus was not born of the Virgin Mary, and palliated their errors with a shew of reasoning from this reproofing passage in St. John, saying, how could she be his mother to whom he said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" On this occasion, the good father speaks thus, 'What is the meaning of this? Did he come to the marriage-feast to instruct men in throwing contempt on mothers? Undoubtedly, my brethren, there is some secret meaning in this. I fear your minds are corrupted from the simplicity and purity that is in Christ, by some who derogate from the gospel, and say, that Jesus was not born of the Virgin Mary, and endeavour to argue from hence in favour of their error, and ask, How was she his mother, when he says, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" Some persons from hence have corrupted the faith of the church; and they who seem so to honour Christ, as to deny that he assumed a real body, make him a liar.' He adds, 'If Mary was not his true mother, the body he assumed was not a real one; his death was not true, the wounds given him at his passion were not true, and the scars of those wounds shewn at his resurrection were not true,' &c. Austin, therefore, here opposes with zeal the error of those that denied from hence that our Lord assumed the true human nature.

But our author proceeds to another objection against the miracle of turning water into wine, and quotes St. Chrysostom on the place for it, as saying, 'that great offence was taken at the story of this wedding at Cana, and the presence of Jesus at a riotous feast; and that Jesus, when the company was drunk, used some artifice in putting false and counterfeit wine upon them. But at the same time that he cited Chrysostom as reporting the objection, he should, in common honesty, have reported that father's solution of it. But this, though highly reasonable, was not agreeable to the principal design of his scheme, namely, to calumniate Jesus, and to condemn the honour of his miracles. However, to put this matter in a clear light, and to give an answer to Chrysostom himself to the objection proposed, we shall cite both the objection and answer out of his homily on the place. Now they stand thus: 'Some again here scoff, and say, this was an assembly of drunken men; and that the senses of the judges were vitiated, and were not capable of forming a right judgment of what was transacted! so that they could not know whether it was water or wine that was pretended to be made: for, say they, that the company was drunk, the governor of the feast shewed by what he said. But this is a very ridiculous pretence; besides, the Evangelist has cut off this suspicion of theirs: since he says, that it was not the guests that gave their judgments on the fact, but it was the governor of the feast, who was sober, and as yet had tasted nothing. And it is well known that they who are chiefly intrusted with the management of such entertainments are eminently sober, as being chiefly solicitous about the good order and regulation of the feast. And therefore the sobriety of the governor of the feast was appealed to by Jesus, in testimony of the reality of the wine then made.' And again, he adds, 'That the words "according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews," were not inserted without some view in this narrative, but indeed were so in order to prevent the suspicion of certain infidels, namely, 'that some lees of wine were left in those pots, which, being mixed with water poured upon them, made a very small sort of wine.' And therefore, says the Evangelist, "this was according to the purification of the Jews," to shew that those vessels never had been receptacles of wine.' That is, in short, that some infidels calumniated this fact of Jesus; but that the offence which they took at it was very unreasonable: consequently, that the company had not lost their taste to such a degree, as not to be able to distinguish between wine and water. And Chrysostom very judiciously observes thus afterwards in his homily; 'That Christ really turned water into wine, the servants who drew the water and filled the pots with it at his command, were witnesses; and that it was good wine which was so made out of water, the governor of the feast, to whom, by the command of Christ, the same servants filled it out and carried it, was a competent witness; as was likewise the bridegroom, to whom the governor of the feast recommended it as good wine, though his suffrage was not thought necessary by the Evangelist to be added.'

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The last objection of the rabbi is, 'That if Jesus had really and miraculously made wine, which no power or art of man could do, he should, to prevent all suspicion of deceit in the miracle, have done it without the use of water.' And afterwards he adds, 'For this subject-matter of water spoils the credit of the miracle.' And again, 'That a rational answer ought to be given to so reasonable a question, as, Why did not Jesus create wine without water, if he could do so? since that would have been an unexceptionable miracle which no infidels could have cavilled at,' &c. Now on this occasion he cites Chrysostom for this objection, as if he himself had made it, or had returned no answer to it; whereas Chrysostom did not make it, but the Gentiles who made the former recorded and answered by him. For after the father had answered those infidels, who supposed the fraud was committed by making a very small sort of wine, by a mixture of some lees of wine and water, he immediately delivers thus another objection of the same infidels: 'And why did he not perform the miracle before he filled the pots with water, which would have been a much more wonderful work? For the change of the quality of the subject-matter, and the creation of a substance out of nothing, are two different things.' Surely as this objection is cited out of Chrysostom, the rabbi should have acted so fairly as to have reported at the same time the answer to it that occurs in Chrysostom; which since he has not done, we will supply it from Chrysostom himself, and not from Theophylact, his abridger, who alone is here cited. It is thus: "Such a creation, it is true, would not appear so credible a miracle to the majority of mankind: for this reason therefore Jesus frequently lessened with design the greatness of his miracles, that they might be more easily received and believed. Here we find it is granted, and that very truly, by Chrysostom, that the creation of wine out of nothing would have been a greater miracle than the change of water into wine. But was not Jesus a free agent? might not he chuse what degree of miraculous power he thought fit to exert? are all his other miracles equal to one another? Though he might, if he pleased, have created wine out of nothing, yet perhaps he thought it not proper on that occasion to exert his creating power: and indeed, there are some reasons assignable why he chose at that juncture rather to transmute, than to create. One of them is, that as this was the first public miracle that Jesus wrought, so it was most proper and modest to discover gradually by way of inference, in the present case, his miraculous power, and not to display the highest instance of omnipotence at his very first appearance in the world. And another reason is, that whereas the rabbi pretends that the creation of wine would have been freer from suspicion than the change of water into wine, the reverse of that assertion is true: since such a supposed creation of wine would have been liable to the suspicion of a secret conveyance of a quantity of natural wine, as supplied by Jesus at his expence or order; and such a suspicion would no doubt have been severely aggravated by infidels into a piece of legerdemain. And again, this change of water into wine, though a miracle confessedly inferior to that of creation of wine, has a considerable advantage over the supposed miracle of creation of it, as the former is a thing of a more sensible and demonstrable nature than the latter, and therefore must have been more convincing though less astonishing than the other. For the servants, who drew the water, drew also the wine made instantly out of that very water, and therefore knew when the change was made. This change, therefore, is confirmed by the testimony of their senses, with regard to the whole process of the miracle; which an unaccountable creation of wine could not have had, and therefore had been more liable to the suspicion of fraud and collusion than the other.

But in answer to Theophylact's reason, 'that a miracle by its greatness might be less credible,' our rabbi objects further, 'that a miracle cannot be too great in itself, when well attested, to transcend credit.' This is true in general, but it admits of some exceptions in particular cases, that is, as the miracle happens to be circumstantiated. And thus the miracle of turning water into wine is a less miracle than that of creating wine; but it must, in the circumstances of the wedding-feast, have been more credible than the other, as it has been shewn to be of a more sensible nature, and of a process capable of better testimony. The attestation of the greater miracle must bear a due proportion to the

the greatness of it; whereas the attestation is greater in the change of water than in the creation of wine, as well as more agreeable to the expectations and notions of men about the first miracle of a prophet not yet shewn to the world, who may reasonably be thought to begin with some lower sort of miracle.

But though this miracle was performed in so private and humble a manner, that it was left to be discovered by the testimonies of the servants then employed; and though this transmutation of water into wine was confessedly a work inferior to that of creation of wine; yet such a transmutation was as real and unexceptionable a miracle in itself as the creation of wine, though it be not of so high a kind. And, in proof of this assertion, we shall offer the judgment of a late learned physician, Dr. Connor, since the opinion of such a person is of greater authority with some people than that of professed divines: for, as he shews that a miracle is an effect produced by the remarkable suspension of some known law of nature, and that as the laws of nature were established by God, they can be suspended by him alone in any eminent degree, and that therefore God alone can perform a real miracle, or communicate a power of doing so; so the transmutation of the nature or essence of one body into the nature or essence of any other body, is such a suspension of the established laws of nature as is miraculous, and consequently is produced by God; who alone, as he was the author of nature, can change the motion, and texture, and figure, and bulk of the particles of water, into those which specifically constitute wine. Such a transmutation, therefore, is a real miracle upon philosophical principles; and this very change of water into wine is particularly referred to by that writer. But, indeed, when we consider, by way of illustration of this miracle, that all the wit and industry of many ages has not been able to discover the art of transmuting the nature and essence of any body whatsoever into the specific nature and qualities of gold; so perfect a change of the nature of water into that of wine ought to be considered as a supernatural effect, and therefore, when proved by credible testimonies, as a miraculous operation.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LEPER CLEANSSED. THE CENTURION'S SERVANT HEALED. THE IMPOTENT MAN CURED AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA. THE WIDOW'S SON RAISED. JOHN SENDS TWO OF HIS DISCIPLES TO INQUIRE ABOUT CHRIST. MARY MAGDALEN, IN SIMON'S HOUSE, WASHES CHRIST'S FEET WITH HER TEARS. THE MEN CURED WHO HAD, BY BEING POSSESSED OF THE DEVIL, LOST THE SIGHT OF THEIR EYES, AND USE OF THEIR TONGUES. CHRIST ACCUSED OF CASTING OUT DEVILS BY BEELZEBUB, THE PRINCE OF THE DEVILS.

AT TENDED by his disciples, our Lord continued his progress through Galilee, to which country his reputation was not confined; for it was extended throughout Coelosyria and other countries. Dæmoniacks, lunatics, and others afflicted with the most dreadful diseases, which were deemed incurable by the utmost art of man, were brought to him from very distant parts, and he wrought perfect cures upon them with the utmost facility. In consequence of these great miracles, a prodigious number of disciples resorted to Jesus from Decapolis, Jerusalem, the different parts of Judæa, and the towns beyond the Jordan.

In passing through one of the towns of Galilee, our Saviour was accosted by "a man full of leprosy, who, seeing Jesus, fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," Luke v. 12. Compassionating the suffering of this unhappy man, the benevolent Jesus stretched forth his hand, and, touching him, said, "Be thou cleansed." These words were no sooner pronounced, than all the man's afflictions were removed. Jesus now commanded him immediately to repair to Jerusalem, and present himself to the priest, whose office was, to determine whether lepers were perfectly cured, in order that his restoration might be authenticated, and publicly proclaimed; and

at the same time he reminded him of the necessity of presenting the gifts required by the law of Moses, and of conforming to all the legal institutions.

Something of the same kind prevailed among the ancient Egyptians; and in several parts of the world, at this time, the priests are the only physicians. And this "shewing of himself" was necessary to every one that had been leprous, though never so perfectly cured; wherefore Christ, who "came to fulfill the law," lays this injunction in the present case.

The nature and causes of a leprosy have been much argued on. The generality are of opinion, that the cause of it is inward, in the blood and humours; and that it does not appear outwardly, till it has corrupted every thing within. Others believe it owing to some outward cause. Perhaps there may be leprosy of both sorts; in one of which, corruption of the blood is the cause, in the other the effect, of this disease. It is the cause of it, when the blood, being inwardly corrupted, either by bad diet, or any other means, produces such external effects as are observable in leprosy. It is an effect, when this disease is caught by touching any person infected with it, or any thing belonging to him, by which ways it is easily communicated.

Lepers were formerly very frequent in Europe: they were called Lazars, and there were abundance of hospitals built for them, called lazar-houses, or lazarettoes, and dedicated either to Saint Lazarus, or Saint Job. Of these hospitals, Matthew Paris says there were nine thousand in Europe. But for these last two hundred years leprosy is almost entirely ceased; or, at least, they have changed their name, and methods have been found out for curing them.

The fame of Jesus was now so great and universal, that immense numbers of people daily attended to hear him preach the gospel, and to be cured of the many bodily afflictions to which human nature is subject. The continual fatigue to which the benevolent Jesus exposed himself, for the spiritual and bodily advantage of mankind, at length rendered a temporary retirement necessary: he therefore repaired into the wilderness, that he might invigorate his body by repose, and his spirit by prayer and other devotional exercises.

Having sojourned some time in Peræa, Christ embarked on the lake of Gennesareth, and sailed for Capernaum, where he had no sooner arrived, than great numbers of people resorted to him; and among these were many of the Pharisees and doctors of the law, who seated themselves in the porch of the house where our Lord resided. In the presence of the Pharisees and the doctors, Christ wrought cures upon all the persons who applied to him for relief; and the astonishing effects of his divine power brought such a concourse of people about him, that all access to the house was intercepted.

While our Saviour was preaching to the multitude, a paralytic, lying on a couch, was brought towards him on the shoulders of four men, who endeavoured to force a passage through the crowd, that they might lay the patient at the feet of our Lord, and supplicate his compassion in behalf of the miserable object. Disappointed in their endeavours to approach Jesus, they got into the gallery of the house; and ascending thence to the top of the porch, they drew up the sick man in his couch. Then unroofing a part of the building, by means of ropes they lowered the patient into the middle of the porch, placing him before Jesus; who perceiving the strong persuasion which these people entertained of his divine power, and their confidence in his ability to administer relief to the diseased, he addressed himself to the paralytic to the following effect: "Son, be of good comfort; thy sins are forgiven thee."

The Pharisees and the doctors of the law, in a private conference, agreed that Jesus had been guilty of blasphemy, and that God only had power to forgive sins, for they were ignorant that Jesus spoke by the divine Spirit. Perceiving their sentiments, our Lord said to them, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." The man, finding himself immediately

ately relieved from his affliction, obeyed the command of Jesus, magnifying the power of God for having experienced so miraculous a delivery. This event struck the people with a religious awe; and they praised God for having bestowed upon the Son of man the wonderful power of healing, with a word, every distemper incident to human nature.

Jesus afterwards went into Capernaum, the usual place of his residence; where he was no sooner arrived, than there came to him the heads of the inhabitants, as messengers from a certain centurion, whose favourite servant lay at the point of death. These men besought him, in the most pressing manner, to go with them to the centurion's house, and cure his servant; urging, that this officer was a very good man, who, since he had resided among them, had done very peculiar favours to their nation, particularly that he had built them a synagogue at Capernaum, at his own proper cost; and that therefore he deserved to have all favour shewn him by the Jews in general, and by every one of them in particular.

Jesus, being prevailed upon by these reasons, went with them towards the house of the centurion; and, when not far from it, was accosted by some other of that officer's friends, with this message from him: 'That he did not think it in the least necessary for him to take the trouble upon him to come in person to his house, as knowing very well that he was able, by speaking one word only, though at never so great a distance from him, to heal his servant: that he looked upon himself as unworthy to entertain so great a prophet; for which reason, he did not wait upon him in person, but had recourse to the mediation of his Jewish friends for the obtaining this favour from him; that he considered, that as he himself, who was under the command of superior officers, had yet soldiers of his company, and domestic servants, whom he might send on what errands, and whithersoever he pleased; so Jesus, who was supreme governor of the universe, had angels at his command, any of whom, dispatched by his authority, would be able to cure his servant.'

Jesus, having received this message from the centurion, admired the singular confidence which this man had conceived of the power he was invested with; and, turning himself to the multitude, declared before them all, that he had not met with any one among the Jews who entertained such notions concerning his divine power.

Great variety of suitors resorted to Christ; one comes to him for a son, another for a daughter, a third for himself: I see none come for his servant, but this one centurion; neither was he a more eminent man than a master. His servant is sick; he does not drive him out of doors, but lodges him at home: neither does he stand gazing by his bed's-side, but seeks for assistance. He applies not to witches or charmers, but to Christ; he seeks to Christ, not with a fashionable relation, but with a vehement aggravation of the disease. Had the master been sick, the faithfullest servant could not have done more. He is unworthy to be well served, who will not sometimes wait upon his followers. Conceits of inferiority should not breed in us a neglect of charitable offices; we must so look down upon our servants here on earth, that we may with confidence look up to our Master which is in heaven.

But why didst thou not, O centurion, rather bring thy servant to Christ for cure, than sue for him while absent? There was a paralytic, whom faith and charity brought to our Saviour, and let down through the uncovered roof in his bed: why was not thine so carried, so presented? Did the strength of thy faith assure thee, thou neededst not shew thy servant to him who saw all things? One and the same grace may produce contrary effects; they, because they believed, brought the patient to Christ; thou didst not bring thy servant to him, because thou believedst their act argued equal desire; thine, more confidence; thy labour was less, because thy faith was greater. Oh that I could come thus to my Saviour, and make such moan to him for myself! Lord, my soul is sick of unbelief, sick of self-love, sick of inordinate desires, I need not say more: thy mercy, O Saviour, would not then stay by for my suit, but would prevent me (as here) with a gracious promise, "I will come and heal thee." I did not hear the centurion say, "Either come, or heal him:" the one he meant, though he said it not; the other he neither said

nor meant: Christ over-gives, both in his words and intentions. It is the manner of that divine munificence, where he meets with a faithful suitor, to give more than is requested. The very insinuations of our necessities are no less violent than successful: we think the measure of human bounty runs over, when we obtain but what we ask with importunity: that infinite goodness keeps within bounds, when it overflows the desires of our hearts.

As he said, so he did; the word of Christ either is his act, or concurs with it; he did not stand still when he said, "I will come," but he went as he spake. When the ruler intreated him for his son, "Come down ere he die," our Saviour stirred not a foot: the centurion did but complain of the sickness of his servant, and Christ unasked says, "I will come and heal him." That he might be far from so much as seeming to honour wealth, and despise meanness, he that came in the shape of a servant, would go down to the sick servant's matress, and would not go to the bed of the rich ruler's son: it is the basest motive of respect that arises merely from outward greatness. Either more grace or more need, may justly challenge favourable regards to us no less than private obligations.

Oh admirable return of humility! Christ will go down to visit the sick servant; the master of that servant says, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof." The Jewish elders, who went before to plead for him, could say, "He is worthy that thou shouldest do this for him;" but the centurion when he comes to speak for himself, says, "I am not worthy." They said, He was worthy of Christ's miracle; he says, he is unworthy of Christ's presence: there is great difference betwixt the valuations of others, and our own: sometimes the world under-rates him that finds reason to set an high price upon himself; sometimes again, it over-values a man who knows just cause for his humiliation; if others mistake us, this can be no warrant for our error: we cannot be wise, unless we receive the knowledge of ourselves by direct beams; not by reflection, unless we have learned to condemn unjust applause: and, scorning the flattery of the world, to frown upon our own vileness, "Lord, I am not worthy."

Many a one, if he had been in the centurion's circumstances, would have thought well of him; a captain, a man of good ability and command, a founder of a synagogue, a patron of religion: yet he overlooks all these, and when he casts his eye upon the divine worth of Christ, and his own weakness, he says, "I am not worthy: alas, Lord, I am a Gentile, an alien, a man of blood; thou art holy, thou art omnipotent." True humility will teach us to find out the best of another, and the worst part of ourselves: pride, on the contrary, shews us nothing but matter of admiration in ourselves; in others, of contempt. Whilst he confessed himself unworthy of any favour; he approved himself worthy of all. Had not Christ been before in his heart, he could not have thought himself unworthy to entertain that guest within his house. Under the low roof of an humble breast doth God ever delight to dwell.

It is fit the foundations should be laid deep, where the building is high. The centurion's humility was not more low, than his faith was lofty; that reaches up into heaven, and in the face of human weakness describes omnipotence: "Only say the word, and my servant shall be whole."

Had the centurion's roof been heaven itself, it could not have been worthy to be come under by him, whose word was almighty, and who was the almighty word of his Father; such is Christ confessed by him that says, "Only say the word;" none but a divine Power is unlimited; neither hath faith any other bounds than God himself. No footing is here wanting to remove mountains, or devils, but a word: do but say the word, O Saviour, my sin shall be forgiven; my soul shall be healed, my body shall be raised from dust; both soul and body shall be glorious.

Wherein then consisted the steady confidence of the good centurion? He saw how powerful his own word was with those that were under his command (though himself were under the command of another), the force thereof extended even to absent performances; well therefore might he argue, that a free and unbounded power could give infallible commands, and that the most obstinate disease must therefore needs yield to the beck of the God of nature: weakness may shew us what is in strength; by one drop of water we may see what is in the main ocean; no wonder the centurion was kind to his servants, for they were dutiful to him; he can but say, "Do this," and it is done; these mutual respects operate





CHRIST curing the
IMPOTENT MAN of BETHESDA.

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operate on each other; chearful and diligent service in the one, calls for a due and favourable care in the other; they who neglect to please, cannot complain at being neglected. Oh that I could be but such a servant to my heavenly Master! alas, every of his commands says, "Do this," and I do it not: every of his inhibitions says, "Do it not," and I do it: he says, "Go from the world, I run to it;" he says, "Come to me," I run from him: woe is me, this is not service, but enmity: how can I look for favour, while I return rebellion? It is a gracious master whom we serve; there can be no duty of ours that he sees not, that he acknowledges not, that he crowns not; we could not but be happy, if we could be officious.

What can be more wonderful than to see Christ marvel? All wonder supposes an ignorance going before, and a knowledge following some action unexpected: now who wrought this faith in the centurion; but he that wondered at it? He knew well what he wrought, because he wrought what he would; yet he wondered at what he both wrought and knew, to teach us much more to admire that which he both knows and esteems admirable.

He wrought this faith as God, he wondered at it as man: God wrought, and man admired; he that was both, did both, to teach us where to bestow our wonder. I never find Christ wondering at gold, or silver, at the costly and curious works of human skill or industry: yea, when the disciples wondered at the magnificence of the temple, he rebuked them rather. I find him not wondering at the frame of heaven and earth, nor at the orderly disposition of all creatures and events; the familiarity of these things intercepts the admiration: but when he sees the grace or acts of faith, he so approves them, that he is ravished with wonder. He that rejoiced in the view of his creation, to see that of nothing he had made all things good, rejoices no less in the reformation of his creature, to see, that he had made good of evil: "Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold, thou art fair, and there is no spot in thee; my sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart, thou hast wounded my heart with one of thine eyes."

He that both wrought this faith, and wondered at it, doth now reward it, "Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it unto thee." Never was any faith unseen of Christ, never was any seen without allowance, never was any allowed without reward: the measure of our receipts in the matter of favour, is the proportion of our belief; the infinite mercy of God (which is ever like itself) follows but one rule in his gift to us, the faith that he gives us; give us, O God, to believe, and be it unto us as thou wilt; it shall be to us above that we will.

The centurion sues for his servant, and Christ says, "So be it unto thee:" the servant's health is the benefit of the master; and the master's faith is the health of the servant. If the prayers of an earthly master prevailed so much with the Son of God, for the recovery of a servant, how shall the intercession of the Son of God prevail with his Father in heaven for us that are his impotent children and servants upon earth! What can we want, O Saviour, while thou suest for us? He that hath given thee for us, can deny thee nothing for us, can deny us nothing for thee. In thee we are happy, and shall be glorious. To thee, O thou mighty Redeemer of Israel, with thine eternal Father, together with thy blessed Spirit, one God infinite and incomprehensible, be given all praise, honour, and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The time of the passover drawing nigh, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Near the sheep-market, in this city, was a pool, and adjoining thereto a building with fine porches called Bethesda: these porches were for the reception of patients deemed irrecoverable by the skill of physicians, and they were to wait for the troubling of the water, when they were to bathe therein for the recovery of their health. At a certain season each year, an angel descended, and stirred up the waters of the pool of Bethesda; and the person, how afflicted soever, who had the happiness first to step into the waters, after their angelical commotion, was instantly restored to health.

Approaching this pool, our blessed Saviour observed a man, who, having laboured under a violent disease for eight-and-thirty years, was reduced to a state of the most deplorable imbecillity. Upon being asked by our Lord, whether he was not desirous of a

cure, the man replied in the affirmative, adding, that finding no person to afford him assistance, he had made frequent attempts to get first into the pool, but had as often been disappointed, by some person of greater strength and activity. Compassionating the case of this miserable sufferer, Jesus resolved to make his recovery instrumental, in the manifestation of his own divinity; and therefore he said, "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk." These words were no sooner delivered, than the man, finding himself relieved from his affliction, in obedience to the command of Christ, departed with his bed on his shoulders.

The descent of the angel unquestionably was designed to impart a healing quality to the water; and the purpose of this angelical dispensation, was to preserve a lively sense of the providence of the Almighty, during that interval, when there was an entire cessation of prophecies. A single cure at each angelical commotion of the water, plainly evinced the event to be miraculous; for had many persons been restored, the cures would probably have been attributed to the fanative quality of the water.

The cure of the impotent man was effected on the sabbath; and, when he departed with his bed on his shoulders, the Jews, imagining that he had forgot the time, observed to him, that he was guilty of profanation in carrying a burden on that sacred day. Convinced that the person who had so miraculously restored him to health must be a prophet, and consequently that he would not enjoin him to an unlawful act, the man justified his conduct, urging, that one who possessed such extraordinary powers, which could not but be derived immediately from heaven, must necessarily be incapable of commanding him to act in an unlawful or improper manner: "He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk."

The Jews inquired, by the command of whom it was that he practised the servile act of carrying a burden on the sabbath-day, thereby committing a daring violation of the law? but, not knowing the name of Jesus, he looked round, in order to point him out to the inquirers. However, immediately after performing the cure, Jesus retired from the crowd, in order to avoid the malice of the Scribes and Pharisees.

What feast it was, is questionable, whether the Pasch, as Ireneus, and Beza with him, thinks upon the warrant of John iv. 35. where our Saviour had said, yet four months, and then comes harvest: or whether Pentecost, which was fifty days from the shaking of the sheaf (that was Easter Sunday) as Cyril, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius, and some later: or whether one of the September feasts, as some others; the excellency of the feast makes for Easter; let us inquire why Christ would go up to the feast. I find two silken cords that drew him up thither. 1. His obedience. 2. His desire of manifesting his glory.

First, It was a general law: all males must appear thrice a year before the Lord: behold, he was the God, whom they went up to worship, at the feast, yet he goes up to worship: he began his life in obedience; when he came into his mother's womb, to Bethlehem, at the taxation of Augustus, and so he continues it: he knew his due: Of whom do the kings of the earth receive tribute? of their own, or of strangers? Then their sons are free; yet, he that would pay tribute to Cæsar, will also pay this tribute of obedience to his father; he, that was above the law, yields to the law, he would satisfy the law, though he were not under the law. The Spirit of God says, he learned obedience in that he suffered: surely also, he taught obedience in that he did. It was dangerous to go up to that Jerusalem which he had left before, for their malice: yet now, he will up again, his obedience drew him up to that bloody feast, wherein himself was sacrificed; how much more now, that he might sacrifice? what can we plead to have learned of Christ, if not his first lesson, obedience? The same proclamation that Gideon made to Israel, he makes still to us, As ye see me do, so do ye: whatsoever therefore God enjoins us, either immediately by himself, or mediately by his deputies, if we will be Christians, we must so observe, as those that know themselves bound to tread in his steps, that said, "In the volume of thy book it is written of me, I desired to do thy will, O God," Ps. xl. 6. "I will have obedience," saith God, "and not sacrifice,"

sacrifice," but where sacrifice is obedience, he will have obedience in sacrificing, therefore Christ went up to the feast.

The second motive was the manifestation of his glory: if we be the light of the world, which are so much snuff, what is he that is the Father of lights? It was not for him to be set under the bushel of Nazareth, but upon the table of Jerusalem: thither, and then was the confluence of all the tribes; many a time had Christ passed by this man before, when the streets were empty: for there he lay many years, yet heals him not till now; he that sometimes modestly steals a miracle with a "See thou tell no man," that no man might know it, at other times does wonders upon the scaffold of the world, that no man might be ignorant, and bids proclaim it on the house tops. It was fit the world should be thus publicly convinced, and, either won by belief, or lost by inexcusableness. Good, the more common it is, the better: "I will praise thee (saith David) in the great congregation;" glory is not got in corners; no man (say the envious kinsmen of Christ) keeps close, and would be famous: no, nor that would have God celebrated: the best opportunities must be taken in glorifying him: he that would be crucified at the feast, that his death and resurrection might be more famous, will, at the feast, do miracles, that his divine power might be approved openly. 'Christ is the flower of the field, and not of the garden' (saith Bernard); God cannot abide to have his graces smothered in us. "I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart," saith the Psalmist. Absalom, when he would be notoriously wicked, does his villainy publicly in the eyes of the sun, under no curtain but heaven. He that would do notable service to God, must do it conspicuously. Nicodemus gained well by Christ, but Christ got nothing by him, so long as, like a night bird, he never came to him but with owls and bats: then he began to be a profitable disciple, when he durst oppose the Pharisees in their condemnation of Christ, though indefinitely; but most when, in the night of his death, the light of his faith brought him openly to take down the sacred corpse before all the gazing multitude, and to embalm it.

Whether this pool was intended for washing the beasts to be sacrificed, or to wash the entrails of the sacrifice; whence I remember Jerom fetches the virtue of the water, and, in his time, thought he discerned some redness, as if the blood spilt four hundred years before could still retain its first tincture in a liquid substance; besides, that it would be a strange swimming pool that were brewed with blood: neither will I argue whether it should be Bethesda, or Bethzida, or Bethsheda, or Bethesda, if either you or myself knew not how to be rid of time, we might easily wear out as many hours on this pool, as this poor impotent man did years: but it is edification that we seek, and not curiosity. This pool had five porches: neither will I run here, with St. Austin, into allegories; as that this pool means the people of the Jews, and these five porches, the law in the five books of Moses; nor stand to confute Adricomius, who, out of Josephus, would persuade us that these five porches were built by Solomon; and that this was for the use of the temple. The following words shew the use of the porches: 'for the receipt of impotent, sick, blind, halt, withered,' that waited for the moving of the water. It should seem it was walled about, to keep it from cattle; and these five walled entrances were made by some benefactors, for the better convenience of attendants. Here was the mercy of God seconded by the charity of men: if God will give cure, they will give harbour: surely it is highly commendable to put our hand to God's, and to further good works, by adding conveniences for enjoying them.

Jerusalem was grown a city of blood; by the persecution of the prophets, and a wilful despite of what belonged to her peace: from a profanation of God's temple, they proceeded to a mere formality in God's service; and yet here were public works of charity in the midst of her streets: we may not always judge of the reality and truth of piety by charitable actions. Judas disbursed the money for Christ, yet there was no traitor but he: the poor traveller, who was robbed and wounded betwixt Jerusalem and Jericho, was passed over, first by the priest, then the Levite: at last, the Samaritan came and relieved him: his religion was naught, yet his act was good.

This

This was the place, what was the use of it? all sorts of patients were at the bank of Bethesda: where should cripples be but at the hospital? the sick, blind, lame, withered, all that did either complain of sickness, or impotency, were there: in natural course, one receipt heals not all diseases, no nor one agent; one is an oculist, another a bone-setter, another a surgeon: but all diseases are alike to the supernatural power of God.

Hypocrates (though the prince of physicians) yet swears by Esculapius he will never meddle with cutting for the stone: there is no disease that art will not meddle with: there are many that it cannot cure. The poor Hemorrhoida was eighteen years in the physicians' hands, and had purged away both her body and her substance: yea, some it kills, instead of healing: whence one Hebrew word signifies both physicians and dead men. But behold here, all sicknesses cured by one hand, and by one water. Oh all ye that are spiritually sick and diseased, come to the pool of Bethesda, the blood of Christ. Do ye complain of the blindness of your ignorance? here ye shall receive clearness of sight.

All these may be cured, yet shall be cured at leisure; all must wait, all must hope in waiting: methinks I see how enviously these cripples look one upon another, each thinking the other a hindrance, each watching to prevent the other, each hoping to be next, like emulous courtiers, who gape and vie for the next preferment; and think it a pain to hope, and a torment to be prevented: but Bethesda must be waited on: he deserves his crutches that will not stay God's leisure for his cure: there is no virtue, no success without patience: waiting is a familiar lesson with courtiers: and here we have all need of it: one is sick of an overflowing of the gall; another, of a tumour of pride; another, of the tentigo of lust; another, of the vertigo of inconstancy; another, of the choking quinsy of curses and blasphemies: one, of gluttony; another, of the pleuretic stitches of envy: one of the contracting cramp of covetousness: another, of the consumption of prodigality: one is hide-bound with pride; another is consumed with emulation; another rotten with corrupt desires, and we are so much the sicker, if we feel not these distempers; oh that we could wait at the Bethesda of God; attend diligently upon his ordinances! we could then no more fail of cure, than now we can hope for one. We wait hard, and endure much for the body; what toil do we take that we may toil yet longer! we endure many certain pains for the addition of a few uncertain days, saith Austin: why will we not do thus for the soul? without waiting, it will not be. The cripple, Acts iii. 4. was bidden, "Look up to us:" he looked up, and it was cold comfort that he received: "Silver and gold have I none:" but the next clause made amends for all, "Rise and walk:" and this was, because he attended expecting, ver. 5. Would we be cured? It is not for us to snatch at Bethesda, as a dog at the Nile, nor to draw water and away, as Rebecca; nor to sit awhile on the banks, as the Israelites by the rivers of Babylon; but we must dwell in God's house; wait at Bethesda.

Some time after, Jesus met this person in the temple, and, putting him in mind of the benefit he had received, admonished him, that since, by the favour of God, he had recovered from a distemper that was laid on him for a punishment of his sins, he ought now to think in earnest of a reformation, and seriously to set about it, lest by his ingratitude he should draw down some more grievous affliction upon himself, than that from which he had lately been delivered. The man upon these words presently knew Jesus, and thinking himself obliged to own the author of his cure, inquired for his name: which having learnt, he went to those who had demanded of him who it was that had bid him carry his bed on the sabbath-day, and told them, that it was Jesus of Nazareth who had cured him; probably hoping thereby to convince them that Jesus was indeed a prophet, which point was now a matter of dispute among those who had observed his miracles. But this information had a quite different effect; for they, looking on Jesus as a violator of the sabbath, were inflamed with anger, and adjudged him to deserve to have some capital punishment inflicted on him; not daring to satisfy their malice by their own power, the Romans having deprived them of all authority in capital causes.

Jesus, disregarding their anger, told them, that his heavenly Father poured out innumerable blessings on mankind upon any day indifferently, and without any particular respect being had on this account to the sabbath; and therefore they had no reason to blame

blame him, if, after his father's example, he on that day performed works that were good and salutary. But the Jews were yet more enraged at this; supposing him to have insinuated, that it was not necessary to observe the sabbath; and imagining that he had spoken blasphemy, by styling God his father in a peculiar manner, and not using the phrase that was common in such cases, thereby seeming to make himself equal with God. To this Jesus answered, by telling them, that though they rightly concluded, from what he said, that he affirmed himself to be the Son of God, and equal with the Father, yet was he far from speaking impiety in this, or setting himself in opposition to the Father: 'For the Son,' saith he, 'doth nothing of his own accord, or without commission for it from the Father, and certain knowledge that the Father would have done the same; and therefore he cannot be blameable for having done good, even on the sabbath-day: for out of the infinite love which the Father bears to the Son, he communicates all things to him, by that Spirit with which he hath anointed him; and, as a consequence of this, you shall see greater works than these, and more worthy of your admiration, which the Son shall be enabled to perform by his Spirit. As the Father not only heals the sick, but raises from the dead whomsoever he pleases, so also shall the Son restore to life whomsoever he will. And this power of raising whomsoever he will, the Father hath given him, because he hath made him judge of all men: for "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son," who cannot execute this office till he hath raised men from the dead. They therefore who worship the Father, must worship the Son also, as he who will be their judge hereafter: but whosoever will not worship the Son, will not worship the Father, who hath invested him with his authority and power.

'Be assured, that whosoever obeyeth me, and believeth on him who hath sent me, shall undoubtedly obtain everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation for his past sins, but be translated, immediately after his death, into a blessed state of immortality: which that you may be the more convinced of, the Son of God shall, in a little while, bid the dead arise out of their graves, who, hearing his voice, shall instantly obey him. For as the Father hath the fountain of life in himself, and therefore can impart life to others; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, and to be able to raise by his power whomsoever he will. And he hath also given him authority to condemn those that believe not on him; because, being the Son of God, he hath, notwithstanding, humbled himself so far as to become man, and offer himself for the sins of the world. Let not these things seem incredible to you, for there certainly shall be a time hereafter, in which not only a few only, but all the dead, as well in a natural as in a spiritual sense, shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and be raised out of their graves: and then the righteous, who have lived in a steady course of faith and holiness, shall be rewarded with immortal life; but the wicked, who have died impenitent, shall be doomed to receive those punishments which they have deserved. And in this judgment I, as the Son of man, shall do nothing of my own impulse and pleasure; but as I receive the terms of absolution and condemnation from my Father, so shall I judge: therefore I shall condemn no man unjustly, because I shall not pursue my own will, but punctually obey my Father's orders.

'If in ascribing this power and honour to myself, I required you to believe me merely on my own word, you would not be to blame to distrust what I say; for he who pretends to be delegated from God, and hath no testimony to confirm his mission, cannot be a true prophet: but there is one among you who bears witness of me, whose testimony, as it is not unknown to you, so ought it to be believed by you: I mean John the Baptist, who, when you sent your messengers to him, openly declared the truth before them concerning me. I mention him not for my sake, but for yours (for I need no man's testimony), that by believing what John hath said, you may be rescued from the danger to which your incredulity hath made you liable. He for a while shined forth among you as a burning lamp, and dispelled the darkness of your ignorance; and you seemed, though but for a short season, to be pleased with his light, owning him as a prophet, and a just man: for this reason, I insist upon his testimony, as what should, in the present case, be of

considerable weight, hoping it may work in you that faith in me by which alone you can be saved.

‘But I have yet a much greater witness in my behalf than the testimony of John. The miracles that I perform by virtue of the power which I have received from the Father, and in obedience to his commands; these bear witness of me, and are a much clearer demonstration of my divine authority, and of my mission from the Father, than any thing that John can say. And the Father himself, who hath sent me, hath also borne witness of me, both by a voice from heaven declaring me to be his Son, and by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon me; but on this I insist not, because you neither heard the voice, nor saw the glorious descent in a bodily shape. I appeal to the scriptures, therefore, the revelation that God hath given you; which it is plain you have never seriously and impartially considered, because you believe not in me whom the Father hath sent. Search these sacred writings, the books which you pretend to be diligent in the examination of, and which you think are sufficient to direct you in the way of everlasting life: you will find, that they testify of me as of the person through whom this everlasting life is to be given; and yet you will not become my disciples, that you may obtain it, though I promise it to all who truly believe on me.

‘Alas! it is not your approbation and esteem that I seek for, while I am thus speaking to you; I would only warn you of the evil inclination which I discover in you: for, whatever you pretend, it is apparent from your dealing with me, who come with all these testimonies, that you are destitute of all true love of God. I have told you, that I am come to you in God my Father’s name; and John the Baptist, the miracles that I perform, and your scriptures themselves, are all evidences of this truth; yet you believe me not: but there will come others, without any evidence at all of a divine commission, who shall impose upon you; these will you blindly follow. Indeed the reason of your disbelief of me is easy to be accounted for, since it is the applause of men you seek, which I have not to bestow: hence it is that the rulers, for fear of displeasing the people; and the people, for fear of displeasing the rulers; dare not believe on me; mean while you all condemn the favour and approbation of God, which so manifestly attend on me and my followers, and prefer to it a temporary reputation. Do not, however, imagine that I accuse you to my heavenly Father; there is no need of it; Moses himself shall prove you guilty before God, though you depend so much upon his doctrine, because you have not judged of me by the rules which he hath given you. Therefore, whatever you pretend, you certainly have no reliance upon the words of Moses: for if you believed him, you would also believe me; since he wrote of me so plainly, that whosoever looks upon his prophecies to be true, must be assured in himself that I am sent by the Father. But since you do not believe Moses himself, whose disciples you profess to be, it is no wonder, hated as I am by you, that my words are not received among you with credit.’

Some object, I. That the account given of the pool of Bethesda has no good foundation in history, and that St. John is the only author that has made any mention of it. To this we answer, that though Josephus, the only authentic Jewish historian (except the sacred ones) that is now extant, makes no mention of any miraculous cure upon a commotion of the water in the pool of Bethesda; yet his silence may reasonably be accounted for; and therefore is far from being decisive against the express attestation of an eye-witness of Jesus’s cure there. For is not Josephus silent on several other occasions that bear relation to Jesus? does he so much as intimate the slaughter of the infants at Bethlehem, mentioned by St. Matthew? does he give a clear account of the Roman census, or taxation, that is recorded by St. Luke? or indeed any at all of the “Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices,” as it is recorded by the same Evangelist? why then should his silence be thought an insuperable difficulty in the present case, which has a visible connection with the miraculous cure of the impotent man by Jesus at the pool of Bethesda? For he could not with any decency take notice of the miraculous virtue of the pool of Bethesda, without taking notice at once of the miraculous cure of the impotent man by Jesus at the same place; a cure, that must have
made

made great noise at Jerufalem but a little before Jofephus's time. It is poffible, therefore, that he might decline the mentioning of the one, in order to avoid taking notice of the other.

II. It is denied that the circumftances of this account in St. John are credible. And in order to fhew that they are not fo, feveral questions are propofed; the firft question is, "What was the true occafion of the angel's defcent into the pool?" We answer, to impart an healing quality to the water. 2dly, "Why one difeafed perfon only reaped the benefit of each defcent of the angel?" We answer, that the cure of one difeafed perfon only at once, was more fuitable to fome part of the design of this difpenfation, than the cure of many at a time would have been. For the cure of one perfon alone upon each commotion, evinced that cure to be miraculous; whereas, on fuppoftion many perfons had been cured there at once, thofe cures might have been imputed to the natural virtue of that water, as if it was impregnated with fome mineral; or elfe, as if the warm entrails and blood of the Jewifh facrifices, and efpecially the paffover, gave a balsamic and healing quality to it.

III. "How often in the week, the month, or the year, this angel defcended?" We answer, that the evangelift has not thought fit to gratify our curiofity with any account of thofe niceties; but that it is moft probable this miracle was performed once every year (as Chryfoftom and others have fuppofted), and that this angelical defcent always happened about the time of the paffover.

IV. It is farther objected againft the credibility of the ftory of Bethesda, "that the cures there were irregularly diftributed, and that no proper care was taken by the magiftrates, of the fick and impotent at that place." But furely it ought to be recollected, that the magiftrates had accommodated them with an hofpital for their reception, which had five convenient porches, or cells, for ftepping down into the water upon its commotion by an angel. As for the competition, which might happen between the fick and infirm at Bethesda, the recovery of health in desperate cafes was no doubt a prize worth contending for, and it cannot be denied that health might be difpenfed upon what terms the great Donor of it thought fit. Perhaps he chofe this method of cure, in order to exercife the diligence, and faith, and patience, of the weak and difeafed perfons, and hereby contribute to the cure of their fouls as well as that of their bodies. But to proceed:

What was there in Chrift's fpeech, for which the Jews accused him of blasphemy, as if "he made himfelf equal with God?" The Socinians tell us, the Jews founded their charge of blasphemy upon our Saviour's faying he did the works of God his Father: but we have already affirmed, that they founded it upon the peculiar manner in which he fpoke of God as his Father, "Because he faid God was his own, or his proper Father," as the words import. To make this interpretation a little plainer, let us obferve, 1. That to call God his Father in a common fenfe, could not have occafioned this judgment of the Jews; for Philo, and other of their writers, fpeak of God as the Father not of Ifrael only, but of all thofe who had a true knowledge of him: fuch an expreffion as this could not be thought worthy of death, or worfe than the breach of the fabbath. 2dly, Neither could they accuse him of blasphemy, as "making himfelf equal with God," for faying that he did the works of God; for fuch works they expected their Mefiah to do, and none of them believed that their Mefiah would be God. It neceffarily follows therefore, that Chrift fpeaks of himfelf as the Son of God, not as Adam and the angels were, by creation; nor as good men are, by adoption only; but in a more fublime fenfe, peculiar to himfelf alone; finally, in a fenfe which they would not allow even to their Mefiah: otherwife, they had even accused him for affuming the character of Mefiah, on which the other was dependent, rather than that other which he muft needs have had, upon fuppoftion that he was the Mefiah.

But that the Jews did not expect their Mefiah to be any thing more than man, is generally allowed; and both Origen and Jerome testify as much. Origen fays, that "Having difcourfed with many wife men of the Jews, he could find none of them who allowed the Mefiah was to be God or the Son of God;" that is, in the fublime fenfe above mentioned: and Ieromi, on thefe words of the prophet Jeremiah, "Curfed is he that

that putteth his trust in man," remarks, 'that the Jews are accursed, who trust in a man, that is, in their Messiah, whom they expect to come as a mere man, and not as the Son of God.' Hence their charge of blasphemy on the words of Christ may be supposed to proceed.

In some following verses our Lord asserts his divinity in the plainest manner imaginable: "As the Father raiseth the dead, and quickeneth them, saith he, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." And again, "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." In these places there is more said of Christ, than ever was said of any prophet or apostle: for though the apostles and others raised men from the dead, it is not said of them, that they raised whom they would, or that they had life in themselves; because when they raised any one, it was only to promote the interest of their master Christ, by whose power alone they did it. But to "raise whom he will," is an action represented as proper to God alone, who saith, "I am, and there is none besides me; I kill, and I make alive:" it is to be performed by his sole power, and by the strength of his power, who is a God quickening the dead. Hence it is evident that Christ, who will not only "raise our mortal bodies, but also make them like to his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself," must be God; and that the Father, by "giving him to have life in himself, as the Father hath it in himself," must have given him the fullness of the Deity from which this power is inseparable.

Our Lord went to another city in Galilee, called Nain, attended by many of his disciples, and a great number of other persons; and upon entering the town, they beheld the funeral of a youth, the corpse being followed by a great number of the citizens. "Behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow." Luke vii. 12. Compassionating the poignant distress of the unhappy mother, deprived of her only son in the flower of his youth, when he might have rewarded his mother's toils, by supplying the place of that husband whose loss she had long deplored, and of whom the deceased youth had been the only surviving image, the balm of all her grief, and the hope of her afflicted soul; the benevolent Jesus bid her be of comfort, and approached towards the corpse. Upon his touching the bier, the funeral procession stopped, and a profound silence was observed by the multitude, who, by the superior grace and dignity in the deportment of Jesus, were struck with veneration; and they imagined, that he meant to deduce some fine lessons of morality from the circumstances of the decease of the young man, and the affliction of his mother. Our blessed Redeemer in an audible voice, now said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." This command was no sooner pronounced, than "he that was dead, sat up, and began to speak; and he restored him to his mother." The spectators were struck with a holy and awful fear; "and they glorified God, saying, that a great prophet is arisen up among us; and that God had visited his people." The fame of this miracle, by which was fully accomplished that prophecy of Christ, expressing that "the dead should hear his voice," was with great rapidity circulated throughout Judæa and the adjacent countries. This young man was, in the flower and the strength of his age, swallowed up by death: our decrepid age both expects death, and solicits it; but vigorous youth looks strangely upon that grim serjeant of God: those mellow apples that fall alone from the tree, we gather up with contentment; but we grieve to have the unripe unseasonably beaten down with cudgels.

But more, a young man, the only son, the only child of his mother: no condition can make it other than grievous for a tender mother to part with her own bowels: yet surely store is some mitigation of loss; amongst many children one may be more easily missed; for still we hope the surviving may supply the comforts of the dead: but when all our hopes and joys must either live or die in one, the loss of that one admits of no consolation.

When God would describe the most passionate expression of sorrow that can fall into the miserable, he can but say, "Oh daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and roll thyself in ashes, make lamentation and bitter mourning, as for thine only son;"

and such was the loss, such was the sorrow of this disconsolate mother; neither words nor tears can suffice to delineate it.

Yet more, had she been aided by the counsel and support of a loving yokefellow, this burden might have seemed more tolerable; a good husband may make amends for the loss of a son: had the root been left to her intire, she might better have spared the branch; now both are cut up, all the stay of her life is gone; and she seems abandoned to perfect misery. At length, when she gave herself up for a forlorn mourner, past all expectation of redress, the God of comfort meets her, pities her, relieves her. Here was no solicitor but his own compassion: on other occasions he was sought, and sued to; the centurion comes to him for a servant, the ruler for a son, Jairus for a daughter, the neighbours for the paralytic; here he seeks for the patient, and offers the cure unrequested. While we have to do with the Father of mercies, our afflictions are the most powerful suitors. No tears, no prayers, can move him so much as his own commiseration. Oh God, none of our secret sorrows can be either hid from thine eyes, or kept from thine heart: and when we are past all our hopes, all possibilities of help; then art thou nearest to us for deliverance.

Here was a combination of all parts to mercy. The heart had compassion, the mouth said, "Weep not," the feet went to the bier, the hand touched the coffin, the power of the Godhead raised the dead: what the heart felt was secret to itself, the tongue therefore expresses it in words of comfort, "Weep not." Alas! what are words to such strong and just passions! To bid her not to weep, who had lost her only son, was to persuade her to be miserable, and not feel it: to feel, and not regard it: to regard, and yet to smother it: concealment does not remedy, but aggravate sorrow: that with the counsel of not weeping, therefore, she might see cause of not weeping; his hand seconds his tongue; he arrests the coffin, and frees the prisoner; "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise:" the Lord of life and death speaks with command; no finite power could have said so without presumption, or with success: that is the voice which shall one day call up our scattered bodies from those elements into which they are passed, and raise them out of their dust; neither sea, nor death, nor hell, can presume to detain their dead, when he charges them to be delivered. Incredulous nature! why dost thou shrink at the possibility of a resurrection, when the God of nature undertakes it? It is not more difficult for that almighty Word, which gave being to all things, to say, "Let them be repaired," than, "Let them be made."

I do not see our Saviour stretching himself upon the dead corpse, as Elias and Elisha upon the sons of the Shunamite and Sareptan; nor kneeling down, and praying by the bier, as Peter did to Dorcas; but I hear him so speaking to the dead, as if the body were alive; and so speaking to the dead, that by the word he makes him alive. "I say unto thee, Arise." Death has no power to make that man lie still, whom the Son of God bids "Arise." Immediately he that was dead sat up. So at the sound of the last trumpet, by the power of the same voice, we shall arise out of the dust, and stand up glorious; "this mortal shall put on immortality; this corruptible, incorruption." This body shall not be buried, but sown; and at our day shall therefore spring up with a plentiful increase of glory. How comfortless, how desperate would be our lying down, if it were not for this assurance of rising! And now, behold, lest our weak faith should stagger at the assent to so great a difficulty, he hath already, by what he hath done, given us earnest of what he will do. The power that can raise one man, can raise a thousand, a million, a world: no power can raise one man but that which is infinite; and that which is infinite, admits of no limitation: under the Old Testament, God raised one, by Elias; another, by Elisha living; a third, by Elisha dead: by the hand of the Mediator of the New Testament, he raised here the son of the widow, the daughter of Jairus, Lazarus, and, as attendants on his own resurrection, he made a gaol-delivery of holy prisoners at Jerusalem. He raises the daughter of Jairus from her bed; this widow's son from his coffin; Lazarus from his grave; the dead saints of Jerusalem from their rottenness; that it might appear no degree of death can hinder the efficacy of his over-ruling power and command: he that keeps the keys of death, can not only make way for himself through

the common hall and outer rooms, but through the inward and most recluse closets of darknefs.

Methinks I fee this young man, who was thus miraculoufly awakened from his deadly fleep, wiping and rubbing thofe eyes which had been fhut up in death; and, defcending from the bier, wrapping his winding fheet about his loins, caft himfelf down in a paffionate thankfulness, at the feet of his almighty reftorer: adoring that divine power which had commanded his foul back again to her forfaken lodging; and though I hear not what he faid, yet I dare fay they were words of praife and wonder, which his returned foul firft uttered. It was the mother whom our Saviour pitied in this act, not the fon (who now, forced from his quiet reft, muft twice pafs through the gates of death). As for her fake, therefore, he was raifed; fo to her hands was he delivered; that fhe might acknowledge that foul given to her, not to the poffeffor. Who cannot but feel the amazement and ecftafy of joy that was in this revived mother, when her fon now falutes her from out of another world! and both receives and gives congratulations of his new life! How fuddenly were all the tears of that mournful train dried up with joyful aftonifhment! How foon is that funeral banquet turned into a new birth-day feaft! What ftriving was here to falute the late carcafe of their returned neighbour! What awful and admiring looks were caft upon that Lord of life, who, feeming homely, was approved omnipotent! How gladly did every tongue celebrate both the work and the author! "A great prophet is raifed up amongst us, and God hath vifited his people." A prophet was the higheft name they could find for him, whom they faw like themfelves in fhape, above themfelves in power; they were not yet acquainted with God manifefed in the flefh: this miracle might well have affured them of more than a prophet; but he that raifed the dead man from the bier, would not fuddenly raife thefe dead hearts from the grave of infidelity: they fhall fee reafon enough to know that the Prophet, who was raifed up to them, was the God that now vifited them, and at laft fhall do as much for them as he had done for the young man, raife them from death to life, from duft to glory.

The difciples of John the Baptift, who, as we have related, was imprifoned at Machæras, acquainted him with the miracles Jefus wrought, and the doctrine he delivered. John, who knew him to be the Mefiah by a revelation from heaven, might wonder there had not been a greater change in the affairs of the Jewifh nation, fince Jefus had been then entered upon his miniftry a very confiderable time. He called therefore two of his difciples to him, and fent them to Jefus, to inquire of him, in his name, whether he was not that perfon that was to come (not daring publicly to call him Mefiah, or King, left by expreffing himfelf too plainly he might irritate the Romans, as alfo the unbelieving Jews), or whether they were to expect another? They immediately obeyed, and repaired to Jefus, according to the inftructions they received from John.

It happened that when thefe difciples came to Jefus, he was employed in publishing his Gofpel, reftoring health to the fick troubled with divers infirmities, cafting the evil fpirits out of many human bodies, and reftoring fight to the blind: Jefus answered them, therefore, to this purpofe: "Return to your mafter, and tell him, I have given you no direct answer to this queftion, but have ordered you to relate to him what you have feen me do, and heard me teach. Now the blind, as you perceive, through my means, recover their fight, the lame are cured of their infirmity, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are reftored to life, and the poor have the laws and rewards of the kingdom of heaven publifhed to them; and bleffed fhall all they be that are not alienated from me by reafon of my external appearance." By which words he infinuated, that John ought not to have a lefs opinion of him for his not performing thofe exploits which the Jews generally expected from the Mefiah. This was all the reply that Jefus made them, as thinking it not convenient to make a public declaration of his being the Mefiah, leaving that truth to be collected from his doctrine and miracles, to which argument he referred John: for fuch an open profefion would have added no weight to it, and might have caufed an infurrection among the Jews, who were very much galled with the Roman yoke, and therefore defirous of a revolution; befides, that they expected their Mefiah fhould

should reign over them like a glorious conqueror, after having freed them from the tyranny of the Romans.

The disciples of John having left Jesus, he began to discourse to the people concerning John. "What was the reason," said he, "you went into the desert, where John lived before he was cast into prison? did you go to see reeds shaken by the wind, or John? Him, without doubt. But what was there so remarkable in John? Did you expect to find a courtier, and one conspicuous for his rich apparel? His raiment, you know, was as mean as possible, and such gaudy persons were to be seen daily in the courts of Herod and Philip." In which words Jesus intimated, though obscurely, that the reign of the Messiah should be no-ways like any terrestrial reign, since John, who was the fore-runner of him, did not in the least resemble any of the courtiers of the tetrarch of Galilee, or Trachonitis. 'But (continued he) what was it you were thus earnest to see in the desert where John lived? You expected, no doubt, to find a prophet; and truly I esteem him greater than a prophet, since it is concerning this person that God says, in Malachi, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." 'Now take notice, that there never was a greater prophet than John the Baptist: for he has had clearer revelations concerning the Messiah than all of them; and he it is who was employed in promulgating the laws of the approaching reign of the Messiah, which were almost wholly unknown before; and yet the meanest person, who shall become a member of my church, shall excell him in this particular. From the time that John the Baptist began to exhort you to repentance, the kingdom of the Messiah has, as it were, been seized on by men, whom you look upon as unjust and violent; the tax-gatherers, for instance, and others of that stamp, who have cheerfully submitted to mine and John's baptism.

'The law and the prophets continued in force till the time that John entered upon his office; nor were there any rules known, but what were contained in the precepts of the one, or the prophecies of the other: but after John began to preach unto you, the laws of the kingdom of heaven have been more fully opened, and the rewards that attend the obedience to them have been manifested to you. This personage, if you will believe me, is that Elias, who, according to the prophecy of Malachi, was to appear "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Whoever has a serious concern for his own salvation, and is convinced it is his duty to examine into the means proposed for obtaining it, let him ponder my words, and infer from them what it is not necessary for me at present to express more plainly to him. A great multitude of the common people, and the very publicans, out of a due sense of the greatness of their crimes, which had stirred up God's justice against them, have embraced the baptism of John, and are become truly penitent; but the Pharisees, and almost all the doctors of the law, those eminently learned and holy persons, as they would fain be thought, have rejected the counsel of God exhorting them to repentance, through pride and obstinacy, and refused to be baptized by John, that they might not be obliged to make an open confession of their vices, and so become my disciples. Which behaviour of theirs I can liken to nothing more properly than to the proverbial saying among children at their play: "We have piped, and you have not danced; we have lamented among you, and nobody has been concerned at it." Thus these men have not been persuaded to comply with God's messages to them, inviting them to a reformation, and the advantages that attend it in the kingdom of heaven. John the Baptist, who was first sent to them, led a most austere life in the desert, sustaining himself without either bread or wine; by which severity of life they might have concluded him to be one, who, laying aside all care after the conveniences of this life, made it his great business to put in execution the commands he received from God: him they calumniated as one possessed with an evil spirit, which hurried him into the desert, and made him neglect the sacerdotal duties, and the benefits annexed to them. Whereas I, on the contrary, who have conformed in all outward respects to the general customs of men; who have made no difference in the use of meats and drinks; who have not avoided the conversation of the vulgar, that I might make the more profelytes to my religion;

religion; am traduced by them as a glutton, a lover of wine, and a friend to publicans and sinners. But whoever has a true relish of heavenly things, will easily perceive the divine wisdom in these so different ways of living, and with how much reason they both tend to one and the same end.

Then began Jesus to upbraid the inhabitants of those cities in which, and in whose country, he had wrought his miracles, for their not being prevailed upon to amend their lives: 'O how great punishments (said he) remain for you, ye inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida! If the Tyrians and Sidonians, a people the most abandoned to idolatry, had seen those miracles that have been shewn to you, they would long ago have repented, and implored the divine mercy in sackcloth and ashes: whereas you, who are Jews, who have the true God for the object of your worship, have not been so affected with them, as to amend your lives: they therefore, though idolaters, shall not be so severely punished as you in the day of judgment. And you, O inhabitants of Capernaum, who have been hitherto judged happy by my residence, and the miracles I have performed among you, your obstinacy hereafter shall be punished with the greatest severity of all; for if the citizens of Sodom had seen the miracles of which you have been eye-witnesses, their city would not have been destroyed: those men, though so wicked and impure, would, by a timely reformation, have appeased the wrath of God; they shall therefore suffer less punishment than you.'

After these exclamations, Jesus, addressing himself to his Father, "I thank thee (said he), and acknowledge the wisdom of thy providence, in that thy gospel has been received by the unlearned and undesigning part of mankind, while the men of repute for learning and policy reject it: thus it has pleased thee to order for thy own wise purposes, which it is impossible for men to penetrate." Then turning himself to the auditory, "Whatsoever I teach you (said he) I have received from my heavenly Father, and there is no one knows what I am to do and suffer, inasmuch as no mortal is acquainted with his secret determination but the Son only, and they to whom the Son shall reveal it. O all ye that desire ease, ye who have been wearied out by the many journies the law obliges you to make to Jerusalem, and who groan under the burden of many and grievous rites, embrace my discipline, and you shall find relief.'

Though most of the Pharisees were enemies to Jesus, yet some had a greater sense of humanity, and were more obliging to him: among these was one Simon, who at a certain time invited him to dinner, which Jesus accepted of. While he was at this entertainment, there fell out a remarkable incident: for, having placed himself at the table with the other guests, a certain woman of that town who had led a loose life, but had lately been converted by the preaching of Jesus, hearing that he was invited to the banquet, took a box of ointment, and went with it to the Pharisee's house; and, entering the room where the feast was served up, she stood at Jesus's back, and wept so violently that her tears ran down upon his feet, which she wiped with the hair of her head, and kissed, and anointed with the ointment she had brought with her.

The Pharisee, observing this, thought within himself, that if Jesus was a prophet, he would have known the quality of the woman, and therefore would not have permitted her so much as to touch him. But Jesus, not unacquainted with the Pharisee's reflection, thus addressed himself to him: "I have one question (said he) to put to thee." Simon told him, he was ready to hear and answer it. Then said Jesus, "A certain man had two debtors, to one of whom he had lent five hundred pieces of money, to the other fifty; neither of them being in a condition to discharge their several debts, he frankly forgave them both: now the question that I ask thee is, Which of the two, thinkest thou, will have the greatest sense of the favour bestowed on them?" Simon told him, that, in all likelihood, he who was discharged from the greatest debt would make the most grateful acknowledgment of the kindness of his benefactor; at least, the difference between the benefits seems to suppose a proportionable return of gratitude.'

Jesus approved of his answer, and, turning himself towards the woman, Do you see this woman? (said he) Now behold an instance of the very case I propounded to thee. You, who do not think yourself under any great obligation to me, have received me

no otherwise than men generally receive a common acquaintance; but this woman, ever since I entered your house, has not ceased to express towards me the most lively and tender tokens of her love and affection.

Who knows not the Pharisees to have been the proud enemies of Christ; men over-conceited of themselves, contemptuous of others; severe in shew, hypocrites in deed, strict sectaries, and insolent self-justifiers? yet here one of them invites Christ, and that in good earnest: this man was not (like his fellows) captious, or ceremonious; had he been of their stamp, the omission of washing the feet had been mortal; no profession but hath yielded some good: Nicodemus and Gamaliel were of the same strain. It is not without reason that the Evangelist, who branded this sect for despising the counsel of God against themselves, presently subjoined this history of Simon the Pharisee, as an exception. O Saviour, thou canst find out good Pharisees, good Publicans, yea a good thief upon the cross; and, that thou mayest find such, thou canst make them so.

Behold, a woman in the city that was a sinner: there sat the Saviour. I marvel not that this woman is introduced with a note of wonder; wonder, both on her part, and on Christ's; that any sinner, that a sensual sinner, hardened in a notorious trade of evil, should voluntarily, out of a true remorse for her lewdness, seek to a Saviour, is worthy of a note of admiration. The noise of the gospel is common; but where is the power of it? it hath store of hearers, but few converts: yet were there no wonder in her, if it were not with reference to the power and mercy of Christ: it was his power that thus drew the sinner, his mercy that received her. O Saviour, I wonder at her, but I bless thee for her; by whose only grace she was both moved, and accepted.

"A sinner?" Alas! who was not? who is not so? Not only in many things we sin all; but in all things we are guilty of many sins: had there been a woman not a sinner, it had been beyond wonder: one man there was that was not a sinner; even he that was more than man, that God and man who was the refuge of this sinner; but never a woman that sinned not: yet, he said not, a woman that had sinned, but, that was a sinner. An action doth not give denomination, but a trade. Even the wise charity of Christians (much more the mercy of God) can distinguish between sins of infirmity and the practice of sin; and judge of us, not by a transient act, but by a permanent condition.

The woman was noted for a luxurious and unchaste life; what a deal of variety there is of sins, that cannot be numbered! Every sin continued deserves to brand the soul with this style. Here, one is picked out from the rest; she is not noted for murder, for theft, for idolatry: only her lust makes her a woman that was a sinner; their vices use not to give the owner this title; although they may be more heinous than it.

She was a sinner, now she is not; her very presence denotes her change: had she been still in her old trade, she would no more have endured the sight of Christ than that devil did which cried out, "Art thou come to torment me?" Her eyes had been lamps and fires of lust, not fountains of tears; her hairs had been nets to catch foolish lovers, not a towel to wipe her Saviour's feet; yet still she carries the name of what she was: a scar still remains after the wound is healed; Simon will be ever the leper, and Matthew the publican: how carefully should we avoid those actions which may ever stain us!

What a difference there is betwixt the carriage and proceedings of God and men! The mercy of God, as it calleth those things that are not, as if they were; so it calleth those things that were, as if they were not; "I will remember your iniquities no more;" as some skilful surgeon so sets the bone, or heals the sore, that it cannot be seen where the complaint was.

The place adds to the heinousness of the sin: "In the city." The more public the fact is, the greater is the scandal: sin is sin, though in a desert; the eyes of others do not make the act more vile in itself; but the offence is multiplied by the number of beholders!

I hear no name of either the city, or the woman; she was too well known in her time. How much better is it to be obscure, than infamous? Herein, I doubt not,
No. 5. Z God

God meant to spare the reputation of a penitent convert; he who hates not the person, but the sin, cares only to mention the sin, not the person: it is justice to prosecute the vice, it is mercy to spare the offender. How injurious a presumption is it for any man to name her, whom God would have concealed? and to cast an aspersions on those whom God hath noted for holiness?

The worst of this woman is past, "She was a sinner;" the best is to come, "She sought out Jesus." Where? In the house of a Pharisee. It was the most unlikely place in the world for a noted sinner to seek Christ in.

No men stood so much upon the terms of their own righteousness; no men so scornfully disdained an infamous person as these: the touch of an ordinary (though honest) Jew was to them pollution; how much more the presence of a strumpet! What a sight was a known sinner to him, to whom his holiest neighbour was a sinner! How doth he (though a better Pharisee) look awry to see such a piece in his house, while he dares think, "If this man were a prophet, he would surely know what manner of woman this is!" Neither could she think otherwise, when she ventured to press over the threshold of a Pharisee: yet, not the known austerity of the man, and her unwelcome access to the place, could affright her from seeking her Saviour, even there; no disadvantage can deter the penitent soul from a speedy recourse to Christ. She says not, 'If Jesus were in the street, or in the field, or in the house of some humble Publican, or any where except with a Pharisee, I would come to him; now, I will rather defer my visit, than seek him where I shall find scorn and censure:' but, not fearing the frowns of that supercilious tribe, she thrusts herself into Simon's house to find Jesus. It is not for the distressed to be bashful; it is not for a believer to be timorous. Oh, Saviour! if thy spouse miss thee, she will seek thee through the streets; the blows of the watch shall not daunt her; if thou be on the other side of the water, a Peter will leap into the sea, and swim to thee; if on the other side of the fire, thy blessed martyrs will run through those flames to thee: we are not worthy of the comfort of thy presence, if, wheresoever we know thou art, whether in prison, or in exile, or at the stake, we do not hasten thither to enjoy thee.

The place was not more unfit than the time; a Pharisee's house was not more improper for a sinner, than a feast was for humiliation. Tears at a banquet, are as dances at a funeral. There is a season for all things: music had been more suitable for a feast than mourning.

The heart that hath once felt the sting of sin, and the sweetness of remission, hath no power to delay the expressions of what it feels; and cannot be confined to terms of circumstance.

Whence then was this zeal of her access? Doubtless, she had heard from the mouth of Christ, in those heavenly sermons of his, many gracious invitations to all troubled and labouring souls; she had observed how he vouchsafed to come under the roofs of despised publicans, of professed enemies; she had noted all the passages of his power and mercy; and now deep remorse wrought upon her heart for her former viciousness: the pool of her conscience was troubled by the descending angel, and now she steps in for a cure: the poisoned arrow stuck fast in her soul, which she could not shake out; and now she comes to this sovereign antidote to expel it. Had not the Spirit of God wrought upon her ere she came, and wrought her to come, she had never either sought or found Christ. Now she comes in, and finds that Saviour whom she sought; she comes in, but not empty-handed: what then brings she? It was not possible she could bring to Christ a better present than her own penitent soul: yet, to testify that, she brings another; delicate both for the vessel and the contents; "a box of alabaster;" a solid, hard, pure, clear marble; fit for the reception of so precious an ointment: the ointment was pleasant and costly; a composition of many fragrant odours; not for medicine, but delight.

The soul that is truly touched with the sense of its own sin, can think nothing too good, too dear for Christ: the broken-hearted sinner begins first with the tender of burnt-offerings, and calves of a year old; thence he ascends to hecatombs, thousands of

of rams, and, beyond that, to ten thousand rivers of oil; and moreover, could be content to give the first fruit of his body to expiate the sin of his soul: any thing, every thing, is too small a price for peace. Oh, Saviour! since we have tasted how sweet thou art, lo, we bring thee the daintiest and costliest perfumes of our humble obedience: yea, if so much of our blood, as this woman brought ointment, may be useful or pleasing to thy name, we do most chearfully consecrate it to thee. If we would not have thee think heaven too good for us, why should we sicken at any earthly retribution to thee, in lieu of thy great mercies?

Yet here, I see more than the price; this odoriferous perfume was that, wherewith she had wont to make herself pleasing to her wanton lovers; and now she comes purposely to offer it up to her Saviour. As her love was turned another way, from sensual to divine, so shall her ointment also be altered in the use; that which was abused to luxury, shall now be consecrated to devotion: there is no other effect in every true conversion; "As we have given our members servants to iniquity to commit iniquity, so shall we now give our members servants unto righteousness, in holiness." If the ladies of Israel, who thought nothing else worth looking on but their own faces, have spent too much time in their glasses, now part with those mirrors to make a laver for washing off their uncleanness: if I have spent the prime of my strength, the strength of my wit, upon myself and vanity, I have bestowed my alabaster-box amiss: Oh! now teach me, my God and Saviour, to improve all my time, all my abilities to thy glory; this is too poor a recompence to make thee for those shameful dishonours thou hast received from me.

The woman is come in; and now dares not boldly to face Christ; but, as unworthy of his presence, she stands behind: how could she, in that situation, wash his feet with her tears? Was it, that our Saviour did not sit at the feast (after our method), but, according to the then Jewish and Roman mode, lay on the one side? Or was it that this phrase doth not so much import posture, as presence? Doubtless, it was bashfulness and shame arising from the conscience of her own former wickedness, that placed her thus. How amazingly is the case altered! She used to look boldly in the face of her lovers; now she dares not behold the awful countenance of her Saviour: she formerly sent her alluring beams forth into the eyes of her wanton paramours; now she casts her dejected eyes to the earth, and presumes not so much as to raise them up to see those eyes, from which she hoped for compassion. It was a true inference of the prophet, "Thou hast an whore's forehead, thou canst not blush;" there cannot be a greater sign of whorishness than impudence. This woman can now blush, she hath put off the harlot, and is turned true penitent: bashfulness is both a sign and effect of grace. O God, could we but reflect how wretched we are in nature, how vile through our sins; how glorious, holy, and powerful a God thou art (before whom the brightest angels hide their faces), we could not come but with a trembling awfulness into thy presence!

Together with shame, here is sorrow; a sorrow testified by tears; and tears in such abundance, that she washes the feet of our Saviour with those streams of penitence: "She began to wash his feet with tears;" we hear when she began, we hear not when she ended. When the grapes are pressed, the juice runs forth; so when the mind is pressed, tears distill; the true juice of penitence and sorrow flows. These eyes were not used to such clouds, or to such showers; there was nothing in them formerly but sun-shine of pleasure, beams of lust: now they are melted into drops of grief and contrition. Whence was this change, but from the secret working of God's Spirit? He caused his wind to blow, and the waters flowed; he smote the rock, and the waters gushed out: Oh God, smite thou this rocky heart of mine, and the waters of repentance shall burst forth in abundance!

Never were thy feet, O Saviour, bedewed with more precious liquor than this of tears from a contrite heart; these cannot be so spent, but that thou keepest them in thy bottle; yea, thou returnest them back with interest of true comfort; "They that sow in tears, shall

shall reap in joy: blessed are they that mourn." Lo, this wet seed-time was to be followed with an harvest of happiness and glory.

That this service might be complete, as her eyes were the fountain, so her hair was the towel for wiping the feet of Christ. Doubtless at a feast there was no want of the most curious linen for this purpose; yet all this was nothing to her; to approve her sincere humility, and devotion to Christ, her hair must be put to this glorious office: the hair is the chief ornament of women; the feet, as they are the lowest part of the body, so the meanest in estimation, and homeliest for employment; and lo, this penitent bestows the chief ornament of her head on the meanest office to the feet of her Saviour: that hair which she formerly spread as a net to catch her amorous companions, is honoured with the employment of wiping the beautiful feet of him who brought the glad tidings of peace and salvation; and, might it have been of any service to him, to have licked the dust under those feet of his, how gladly would she have done it! Nothing can be mean that is done to the honour of such a Saviour.

Never was any hair so preferred as this! How I envy those locks that were graced with the touch of those sacred feet; but much more those lips that kissed them: those lips that had been formerly inured to the wanton touches of her lascivious lovers, now sanctify themselves with the testimony of her humble homage, and dear respects to the Son of God. Thus her ointment, hands, eyes, hair, lips, are now consecrated to the service of Christ her Saviour, whom she had offended: if our compunction be not in some kind proportionable to our offence, we are no true penitents.

All this while I hear not one word fall from the mouth of this woman: what need her tongue speak, when her eyes spake, her hands spake, when her gesture, her countenance, her whole carriage was vocal? I like this silent speaking well, when our actions talk, and our tongues hold their peace. The reverse is the common practice; men's tongues are busy, but their hands are still; all their religion lies in their tongue, their hands either do nothing, or do amiss, so that their profession is but wind like their words. Wherefore are words, but for expression of the mind? If that could be known by the eye, or by the hand, the language of both were alike. There are no words amongst spirits; yet they perfectly understand each other. "The heavens declare the glory of God:" all tongues cannot speak so loud as the beings that have none. Give me the Christian that is seen, and not heard. The noise that our tongue makes in a formality of profession, shall (in the silence of our hands) condemn us for hypocrites.

The Pharisee saw all this, but with an evil eye. Had he not had some grace, he had never invited such a guest as Jesus: and if he had had grace enough, he had never entertained such a thought as this of the guest he invited: "If this man were a prophet, he would have known what manner of woman it is that toucheth him, for she is a sinner." How many errors in one breath! Justly, O Simon, hath this one thought lost thee the credit of thy feast: it seems, at the highest, thou judgest thy guest to be but a prophet, and now thou doubtest whether he were so much; besides this undervaluation, how unjust is the ground of this doubt! Every prophet knew not every thing, yea no prophet ever knew all things. Elisha knew the very secrets of the Assyrian privy chamber: yet he knew not the calamity of his worthy hostess. The finite knowledge of the ablest seer reaches but so far as it may please God to extend it; well might he therefore have been a prophet, and in the knowledge of greater matters not have known this.

Add to this, how weakly didst thou, because of Christ's silent admission of the woman, suppose him ignorant of her quality? as if knowledge should be measured always by the noise of expression; stay but a while, and thou shalt find that he well knew both her life, and thy heart: besides, how injuriously dost thou take this woman for what she was; not conceiving (as well thou mightest), Were not this woman a convert, she would never have offered herself into this presence; her modesty, and her tears betoken her change; and if she be changed, why is she censured for what she is not?

Lastly, how strong did it favour of the leaven of thy profession, that thou supposest (were she what she was) that it could not suit with the knowledge, and holiness of a prophet to admit of her least touch, yea, of her presence: whereas, on the one hand, out-

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ward conversation, in itself, makes no man unclean, or holy, but according to the disposition of the patient; on the other, such was the purity and perfection of this thy glorious Guest, that it could not possibly be infected, nor any way obnoxious to the danger of another's sin: he that said once, "Who touched me?" in regard of virtue issuing from him, never said, "Whom have I touched?" in regard of any contagion incident to him. We sinful creatures, in whom the prince of this world finds too much, may easily be tainted with other men's sins; he, who came to take away the sins of the world, was incapable of pollution by sin: had the woman then been still a sinner, thy censure of Christ was proud and unjust.

The Pharisee spake; but it was within himself; and now, behold, "Jesus answering," said.

What we think, we speak to our hearts, and we speak to God; and he equally hears, as if it came out of our mouths. Thoughts are not free from sin; could men know and examine them, they would be no less liable to censure, than if they came forth clothed with words; God, who hears them, judges of them accordingly. So here, the heart of Simon speaks; Jesus answers.

Jesus answers him, but with a parable; he answers many a thought with judgment. The blasphemy of the heart, the murder of the heart, the adultery of the heart, are all answered by him with real vengeance; for our Saviour saw that Simon's error was either out of simple ignorance, or weak mistaking; where he saw no malice, then it is enough to answer with a gentle conviction; the convictive answer of Christ is by way of parable. The parable is of two debtors to one creditor; the one owed a lesser sum, the other a greater; both are forgiven. It was not the purpose of him that propounded it, that we should remain in the dark; God is our creditor, our sins our debts; we are all debtors, but one deeper than another. No man can pay this debt alone; satisfaction by us is not possible; only remission can discharge us; God doth in mercy forgive as well the greatest as the least sins. Our love to God is proportionable to the sense of our remission. So then the Pharisee cannot chuse but confess, that the more and greater the sin is, the greater mercy is shewn in the forgiveness; and the more mercy in the forgiver, the greater obligation, and more love in the person forgiven.

Truth, from whose mouth soever it falls, is worth taking up. Our Saviour praises the true judgment of a Pharisee; it is an injurious indiscretion in those who are so prejudiced against a person, that they reject the truth he utters; he that would not quench the smoking flax, encourages even the least good; as the careful surgeon stroaks the arm, before he strikes the vein: so did Christ here; before he convinces the Pharisee of his want of love, he favours him with a fair approbation of his judgment; yet he at the same time turned both his face and his speech to the poor penitent, as one that cared more for a true humiliation for sin, than for a false pretence of respect and innocence.

With what a dejected and abashed countenance, with what earth-fixed eyes, do we imagine the poor woman stood, when she saw her Saviour direct his face and words to her! She that durst but stand behind him, and secretly and silently let fall some tears upon his feet, with what a blushing astonishment doth she behold his countenance cast upon her? while his eye was turned towards this penitent, his speech was turned to the Pharisee concerning that penitent, by him mistaken. "Seest thou this woman?" He, who before had said, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known what manner of woman this is;" now hears, "Seest thou this woman?" Simon saw but her outside, Jesus lets him see that he saw her heart; and will thus convince the Pharisee, that he is more than a prophet, who knew not her conversation only, but her soul. The Pharisee, who judged only by appearance, was now by her deportment to see the proof of her good disposition; it shall happily shame him to hear the comparison of the wants of his own entertainment, with the abundance of hers.

It is strange that any of this formal sect should be defective in their washings. Simon had not given water to so great a guest; she washes his feet with her tears: by how much the water of the eye was more precious than the water of the earth, so much was the respect and courtesy of this penitent above the neglected office of the Pharisee.

What use was there of a towel, where was no water? She that made a fountain of her eyes, made a precious napkin of her hair; that better flax shamed the linen in the Pharisee's chest.

A kiss of the cheek used to serve as a pledge of the welcome of their guests. Simon neglects to make himself thus happy; she redoubles the kisses of her humble thankfulness upon the blessed feet of her Saviour. The Pharisee omits ordinary oil for the head; she applies the most precious and fragrant oil to his feet. Now the Pharisee reads his own reproof in her praise; and begins to envy where he had scorned.

It is our fault, O Saviour, if that we mistake thee; we are ready to think, if thou have but the substance of good usage, thou regardest not the compliments and ceremonies; whereas, now, we see thee to have both meat and welcome in the Pharisee's house, and yet hear thee glance at his neglect of washing, kissing, anointing! Doubtless, omission of due circumstances in thy entertainment may deserve to lose our thanks. Do we pray to thee? Do we hear thee preach to us? Now we make thee good cheer in our house; but, if we perform not these things with the fit decency of our outward behaviour, we give thee not thy water, thy kisses, thy oil: a suitable carriage at ordinances is requisite for thy full welcome.

Yet, how little had these things been regarded, if they had not argued the woman's thankful love to thee; and the ground of that love, a sense of her pardon, and the Pharisee's default in both?

Love and action necessarily evince each other. True love cannot lurk long unexpressed; it will be looking out at the eyes, creeping out of the mouth, breaking out at the fingers' ends, in some actions of endearment; especially respecting those acts, where there is pain and difficulty to the agent; profit or pleasure to the afflicted. O Lord, in vain shall we profess to love thee, if we do nothing for thee. Since our goodness cannot reach up to thee, who art our glorious head; oh let us bestow upon thy feet (thy poor members here below) our tears, our hands, our ointment, and whatever gifts or endeavours we can exercise or employ, to testify our thankfulness and love to thee in them.

Oh happy word, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven her!" Methinks I see how this poor penitent revived with this sweet expression: how new life comes into her eyes, new blood into her cheeks, new spirits into her countenance, like to our mother earth, when, in that first confused state, God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that beareth seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit;" all run out into flowers, and blossoms, and leaves, and fruit. Her former tears said, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" now her chearful smiles say, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ my Lord."

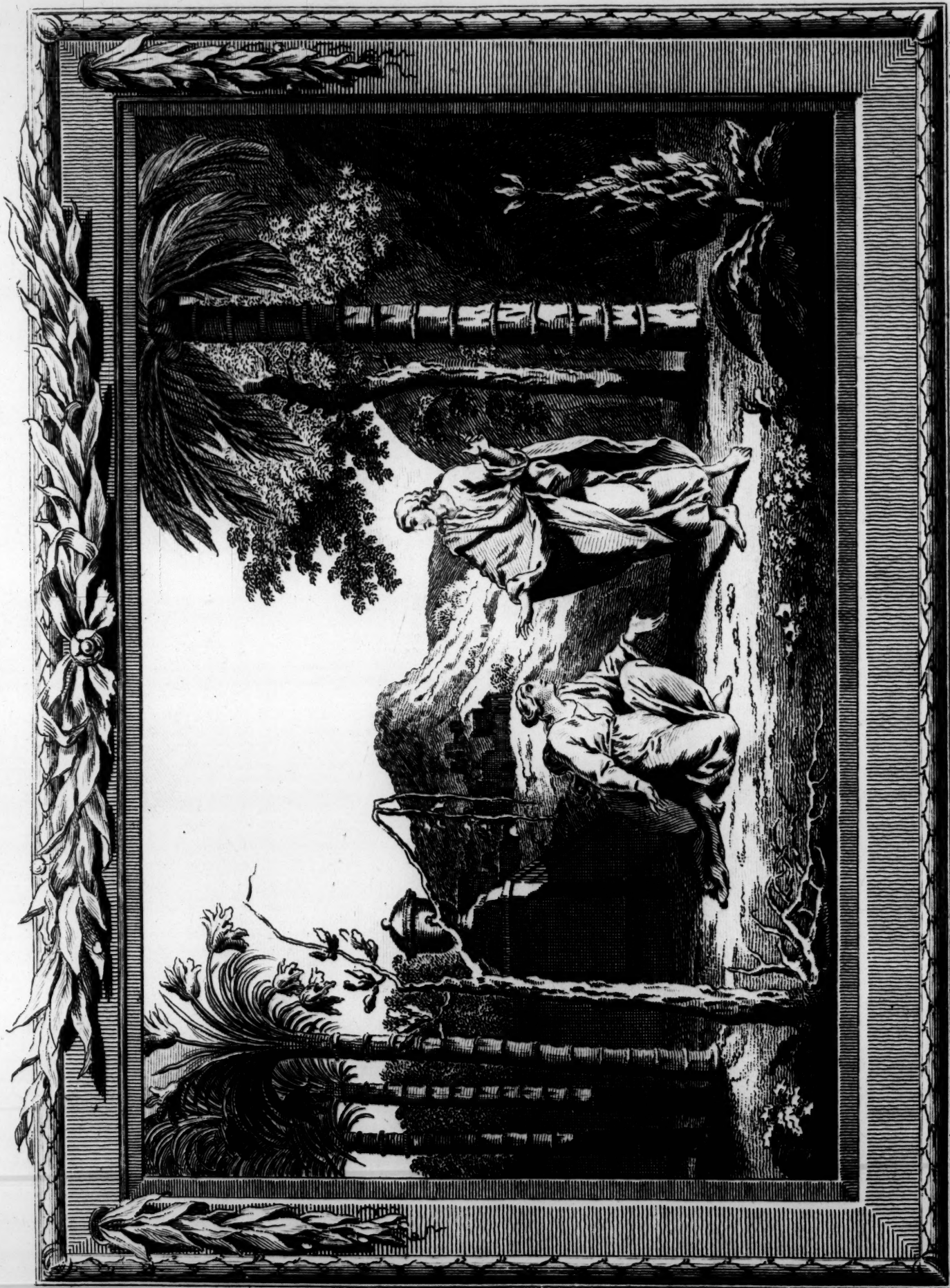
Seldom do we ever meet with so perfect a penitent; seldom do we find so gracious a dismissal. What can be wished by any mortal creature, but forgiveness, safety, faith, peace? all these are here met to make a contrite soul happy. Pardon was the ground of her safety, faith the ground of her peace, safety and salvation the issue of her pardon; peace the blessed fruit of her faith.

Oh, woman! the perfume that thou broughtest is poor and base, in comparison of those sweet favours of rest and happiness that are returned to thee. Well was that ointment bestowed, wherewith thy soul is sweetened to all eternity!

Jesus afterwards continued his progress through Judæa, and, according to his usual custom, published his gospel in every town and village, being constantly attended by the twelve Apostles, whom he had lately made choice of. Moreover, he was accompanied by several women on whom he had wrought miracles, by curing them of their distempers, and casting the evil spirits out of them. The most eminent among these were Mary, surnamed Magdalene, out of whom Jesus had cast seven devils; Joanna, the wife of Chuz, an officer of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee; Susanna, and divers others, whose names I omit. These supplied Jesus and his disciples with all things necessary, and were so far assisting in publishing the good news of salvation.

While he was thus employed in promulgating his gospel, there was brought unto him a certain man, so grievously tormented with an evil spirit, that he was thereby
deprived





C. Crispin sc.

Larkin inv.

Mary Magdalen admiring the Wisdom and goodness of JESUS.

deprived of the use both of his eyes and tongue; him Jesus cured immediately, and perfectly restored to his sight and speech. The whole multitude, who had been eye-witnesses of the miracle, stood amazed at it, and for this reason suspected him to be that king who was to be descended of the family of David, and whom the Jews were now in expectation of: but some of the Pharisees and doctors of the law, who were arrived from Jerusalem, told them, that Jesus did not cast out evil spirits by the divine power, but by the assistance of Beelzebub, chief of those evil spirits; that he himself was possessed by that dæmon, and acted by his authority.

When Jesus understood that this calumny had been divulged by them, though he himself had not heard them, he confuted it with these similitudes. "If," said he, "a kingdom, a city, or a family, be distracted by factions and parties, it is impossible that kingdom, city, or family, should continue long in safety: in like manner, if these evil spirits be thus at variance one with another, their empire must quickly fall, and they cease being formidable to man; which is a point you will not allow. You say it is by the authority of Beelzebub that I cast out the evil spirits, and offer no reason for your calumny. If a man should retort it upon your disciples, who pretend to have the like authority over the dæmons, without producing any ground for such a calumny, would you think he had any right thus to detract from them? what defence soever they are able to make for themselves, consider, I shall have an equal right to it; and take notice, that this injurious calumny of yours will be condemned by whatever answer they can make upon such an occasion. But if I banish the dæmons from the bodies of men by the power of God, and it is not to be denied by you; all must then conclude that I have been sent by God to men, with the good tidings of the approach of the kingdom of God.

"Can a man rob another, a valiant person, and despoil him of his goods before his face, and while he is able to defend them? He can only expect to do it with impunity, after having bound him, or otherwise secured him from making any opposition. Thus it is that I lay waste and destroy the empire of the dæmons, by casting them out of the bodies of men. Know you not that proverbial saying, "He that is not with me is against me: he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad?" which signifies, that neutrals are often looked upon as enemies. How can you then possibly suspect me to be a favourer of those evil spirits, who am so far from being a mere spectator of the misfortunes they afflict men with, that I oppose them in every thing I do and say? It being then thus manifest, that my design is, by the ruin of the devil's empire, to enlarge the kingdom of God, you may take notice, that by calumniating my miracles, as proceeding from the assistance of the evil spirit, you have incurred the guilt of the most heinous of all crimes, and are become obnoxious to the most dreadful of all punishments: for any sin whatsoever, any impious act or saying, shall be forgiven to men upon their sincere repentance; but this calumny against the miracles I have performed by the power of the Holy Ghost, shall never be forgiven to those revilers that have been eye-witnesses of them, because such men are so degenerated, that it would be next to an impossibility to reclaim them. Whoever shall detract from me, not having known me, nor the reasons which manifest my authority: if this man, when he comes to be acquainted with them, retract his error, and repent of such his detraction, he may obtain forgiveness: but whoever, having seen the miracles I have wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost, shall obstinately continue to calumniate them, can by no other argument be induced to repent, and consequently cannot expect any mercy from God." These things were said by Jesus, because the Pharisees and doctors of the law had declared his miracles were performed by a power derived from the evil spirits.

He then continued to speak unto them to this effect: "Either pronounce the tree good, by reason of the good fruit it bears; or, if you condemn it, shew us the bad fruit it has produced; for the tree is known by its fruit: if I exhort men only to the pursuit of holiness, you ought to infer that my exhortation proceeds from a disposition inflamed with a zeal for holiness; or if you censure my actions as proceeding from an evil temper, you ought to warrant this censure, by producing an instance of something evil in
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my doctrine. But, O you degenerated race of men, so truly like envenomed serpents, it will be impossible for you to be more candid in your judgments, while you continue thus debased by wickedness: for, being plunged in vice, your discourse must favour of the general corruption: whereas there is a beauteous harmony in every thing a good man says and does; and the different expressions of these men discover the different notions they are both furnished with. But I forewarn you, that men shall be severely punished hereafter for every word that shall be pronounced with a design to draw men off from the pursuit of holiness; for were there no ill consequence attending it, your words are the demonstration of the inward frame and temper of your mind."

After Jesus had said this, several of the lawyers and Pharisees (not out of any love to truth, but merely to tempt him) desired him to perform some miracle before them. But Jesus, who was not wont to refuse this favour to such as really stood in need of this conviction, and desired it out of a principle of piety, thus replied: "This depraved and vicious age, whatever pretences they make to the true worship of God, require a miracle from me, as if I had not hitherto performed any; but they shall receive no other from me to induce them to believe me, than a miracle like to that of the prophet Jonas: for as that prophet continued three days in the belly of the whale that had swallowed him up, out of which he was delivered alive and unhurt; in like manner shall I rise again, after I have been buried three days in the sepulchre. In the day of judgment the example of the Ninevites shall be objected to the men of this age, and shall be one argument for their condemnation: for the inhabitants of that city repented at the preaching of the prophet; but the present Jews are not in the least affected with the words and miracles of a person much greater than Jonas. They shall also be reproached with, and condemned by, the example of the queen of the Sabæans, who came from the remotest part of Arabia, to be a witness of the wisdom of Solomon, and returned into her own country after she had heard his discourses with admiration; whereas there is among the Jews of this age one infinitely superior to Solomon, and yet they lightly esteem his doctrine: but let them take notice of the punishment that attends their obduracy. When the evil spirit hath been dispossessed of the body of any person, and is prohibited from re-entering for some time, he wanders about in solitudes, in quest of some place to rest in; but finding none, he bethinks himself at last of the habitation from which he had been of late expelled. If the person in whose behalf Providence hath so graciously concerned itself do not prove the better for so great a benefit, the dæmon, at his return, will find a free admission, and the place be like a house cleansed and set in order to receive a long-expected friend. The evil spirit finds room, even enough for many others worse than himself, which comes to pass by the just judgment of God upon the impotence of that man, who slighted so great a mercy: and this latter condition of the man will be much worse than when he was before possessed with the evil spirit. The like afflictions shall happen to the Jews of this age, if, after all the wonders I have wrought among them, and the means I have used to set them free from their crimes and vices, they take no notice of my preaching and miracles, and continue in a course of wickedness; God will in that case give them up to themselves, and in this deplorable condition they shall grow worse, and draw down God's severest judgment upon them."

While Jesus was thus discoursing to the multitude round about him, his mother and some of his relations came thither, and were desirous to speak with him; of which he was informed by some of the auditory, they not having been able to press through the crowd, Jesus then stretching his hand out, and looking round upon his disciples and hearers; "All those (said he) are of my family, who have diligently heard my doctrine, who embrace the gospel with sincerity, and are resolved to live in obedience to the laws of it: these are to me instead of a mother, and the nearest relations; whom I am commanded to take care of, and not only of those that are allied unto me by consanguinity."

The same day Jesus went out to the lake of Gennefareth*, and began to instruct the people upon the shore. But the multitude increasing, in order to avoid the press, and that many might hear him, he went into a small boat, and putting off a little from the shore, he from thence preached unto them, describing in similitudes the various tempers of his hearers, and the different effects his publishing the gospel had among them. "Hearken," said he, "attentively to what I am about to speak unto you; for it concerns you very much to be acquainted with it. A sower went forth to sow, and, being thus busied, part of his seed fell upon the highway, which was not separated from his field by any hedge or ditch; by which it came to pass that this seed was lost, partly by being trodden under foot, and partly by the birds which picked it up, as not having been covered with any earth. Other of his seed fell upon stony places, and shortly after sprung up, not having been buried deep enough in the ground: this was quickly burnt up by the vehement heat of the sun, as not having taken root deep enough, and being destitute of moisture. Some of it fell upon a place overgrown with briars and thorns, which growing up choaked the seed, and hindered it from bringing forth any fruit in those parts. Lastly, some of it fell on a good and fertile soil, and brought forth great plenty of corn, insomuch as for one grain sowed, they reaped thirty, sixty, and even an hundred grains. When Jesus had delivered this parable, he cried out with a loud voice, "Let every one take notice of this, who thinks it his duty to use his utmost endeavour to acquaint himself thoroughly with my doctrine."

When the multitude were dispersed, and the disciples left alone with Jesus, they asked him why he made use so frequently of obscure similitudes before the people, and what was the meaning of this last about the sower. Jesus thus answered them: "God has been pleased to discover to you those things which concern the heavenly kingdom of the Messiah, though he hath not made so clear a revelation of his purposes to others: for whoever like you shall have made a right use of the gifts God hath formerly bestowed upon them, shall receive other and greater benefits from him; but they who have abused his former bounty, shall forfeit all title to future favours. This now is the case of many among the Jews, and this is the reason why I express myself so often in obscure similitudes: for, whereas God had endued them with abilities sufficient to make them acquainted with the truth of my doctrine; yet, though they have heard my discourses, and seen my miracles, they seem no more to have attended to them than if they had been destitute of the use both of their eyes and ears; therefore I speak obscurely to them, because having faculties given them by God, they make no use of them, and are as if

* The sea of Galilee, the sea of Tiberias, or the lake of Gennefareth (for all these names belong to the same water) is frequently mentioned in the Gospels. As it was called the sea of Galilee from the province of Galilee in general, so it was called the sea of Tiberias, from a town of that name standing on its western shore; and it was called the lake of Gennefareth from that particular tract of Galilee, which lay next to, and so bounded it all along, the western side. The breadth of this lake, or sea, Josephus tells us, is forty furlongs, and the length an hundred; the water of it is sweet and potable, without any thing of moorishness either in the taste or colour. It lies upon a gravel, and so more conveniently to be drawn, and softer than either river or fountain water. And with all this it is so cold, that the people of the place cannot warm it, by setting it in the sun in the hottest season in the year. It has in it great variety of fish, which for taste and shape are not to be found any where else; and the river Jordan runs through the midst of it. As to the name whereby this sea went in the times of the Old Testament, it was then, without doubt, called the sea of Chinnereth, or Cinnereth, of which more in the following paragraph.

From the description of the lake of Gennefareth proceed we to describe the land of Gennefareth, which, as Josephus expressly informs us, gave name to the adjoining lake, and is thus described by the said author. This lake takes its name from the country that surrounds it, which is fruitful and agreeable to admiration. As for fertility of the soil, no plant comes amiss to it; besides that it is improved by the skill and industry of the inhabitants to the highest degree; and by a strange felicity of the climate every thing prospers there; as nuts, palms, figs, and olive-trees, that flourish here in perfection, though they require a quite different temperature of air in the nature of them; which looks as if Providence took delight in this place to reconcile contradictions; and as if the very seasons themselves were in a competition which should be most obliging. Figs and grapes hold in season there ten months in the year, and other fruits the whole year about. And the place is not more famous for a delicious air, than it is for a chrySTALLINE flowing fountain, called by the natives Capernaum, which some take for a little gut of the Nile, because of a certain fish in it, that is no where else to be found but in Alexandria.

We shall close the description of the land and lake of Gennefareth with observing, that as Josephus attributes the extraordinary fertility of the land of Gennefareth to the peculiar providence of God, so it was a common saying of the Jews, in reference to the lake of Gennefareth, that God loved that sea more than all the other seas. And indeed it does so far hold good, that this sea above all others was frequently honoured with the divine presence of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, after that he came and dwelt at Capernaum, within the land, and upon the lake of Gennefareth, and that not only before but also after his resurrection.

they were totally deprived of them. Thus it happens to the Jews of this age, what the prophet Isaiah saith concerning those of his time; "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert, and be healed." But blessed are ye, in that having made a right use of the gifts of God, you have reason to hope for an increase of his favours towards you: for I tell you, that many prophets and holy persons have desired to be witnesses of those things which you see and hear, and it hath not been granted to them. But know you not the meaning of the last parable, which is not really obscure? how then will you be able to come to the understanding of those that are so?

"Now the meaning of it is this: the corn sowed is the revelation of God's will; the sower of it is he that publishes this revelation: the hearers are the ground on which the seed falls; the high road is an image of those who listen to the gospel when it is preached, but growing quickly negligent and careless, lay themselves open to the frauds of evil spirits, which quite efface the memory of it, and thereby hinder them from making a right judgment concerning it; and so deprive them of the means of obtaining salvation: the stony ground represents those who willingly embrace the gospel at the first offer of it, but are not deeply affected thereby, and so in time of persecution, upon the account of it, are ready to abandon their profession rather than endure the least calamity. The ground over-run with briars is a designation of those who at first willingly receive the gospel, and for a while are mindful of it, but afterwards are diverted by anxious cares respecting the conveniencies of life, and the earnest pursuit of riches; and thus neglecting to conform their lives answerable to the divine prescriptions of it, render the revelation of it wholly useless to them. Lastly, the good soil represents those who receive it with an honest heart, make it their business to meditate upon it, and, treasuring up the directions and precepts of it in their memories, live all their life-time after in conformity to it, be it attended with ever so great calamities. These are they in whom this divine seed brings forth the plentiful crop I spoke of, though not equally and alike in all.

"Though there may seem to be some obscurity in this parable, as you have observed, yet my design was by no means so unintelligible to all: for as no one lights a candle on purpose to conceal the light of it under some vessel or couch, but to place it on high, that it may be conspicuous for the necessary occasions of the house; so neither do I propound my doctrine to my hearers so as not to be understood by any of them. Suppose no one at first comprehend what is said, it is impossible but it must shine out in a short time: for you may justly apply to it that proverbial saying, "Nothing is hidden that shall not be discovered, nothing secret that shall not be manifested." Whoever therefore would understand my words, let him give attention to them, and they shall become plain and easy, provided he makes use of the faculties God has given him as he ought to do." He then proceeded to caution them against a negligent hearing of his doctrine: "For," saith he, "if you receive what I now deliver with an honest and religious disposition of mind, I will hereafter give you a more clear and copious exposition of my doctrine. Consider diligently what sort of hearers you ought to be: for, if you make a right use of what I now speak to you, I will instruct you farther; otherwise that very knowledge which you seem to have acquired shall become unprofitable to you."

Several other parables Jesus spoke to the multitude. "In the heavenly kingdom of the Messiah," said he, "there shall happen something like the calamity which betel that man, who having sowed his field with good wheat, an enemy came privately in the night-time, and sowed tares amongst it. When the wheat grew up, the tares also grew up along with it; which the servants taking notice of, acquainted their master with it, asking him if he had not sowed his field with wheat; 'From whence then (said they) are these tares?' He told them, he had sown only wheat, and knew nothing of the tares before, but that he imagined some enemy had mischievously mixed the tares among the wheat. The servants then proposed to have the tares rooted up, that the corn afterwards might receive the greater nourishment: but the master forbade it, lest while they plucked up the tares, they might pluck up the corn also; 'Let both grow together (said he) until the time of harvest,

vest, and then you shall gather the tares, and bundle them up together for fuel, and reap the corn, to be stored up in my barns.' The preaching of my gospel may be also likened to seed sown in the ground, which springs up and grows insensibly, while men are asleep, or employed about their worldly affairs: for the earth, after it hath been sown with corn, without any farther labour of the husbandman, completes the work, bringing forth at first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear; which, when it is ripe, is reaped, and laid up in store-houses. We may also compare the doctrine of the gospel to a grain of mustard-seed, which, though it be of the smallest sort of seed, yet shoots forth to such a height, and has so many branches, as to be able to afford shelter to the birds against the heat of the sun, and places to build their nests in.—The gospel may also not unfitly be compared to a little leaven, which a woman mixes with a large quantity of meal, and which causes the whole mass to swell, and to dilate itself in every part of it."

Jesus made use of these similitudes in his discourses to the people, at a time when it was not seasonable for him to express himself more clearly: for questionless they would have been offended, if he had at first openly declared unto them that the power of the Messiah here on earth was to set them free from their vices; that their Jewish rites were now to be abrogated, and give place to a new religion, and other like truths; which were indeed for the honour of the gospel, but little agreeing with the common opinion of the Jews concerning the Messiah, and the perpetual obligation of the law of Moses: for these reasons, Jesus wrapped up those truths in parables, which might else have offended the ears of the unprepared Jews; he did not adopt this method in order to conceal his meaning alike from all, but that he might not immediately alienate the minds of those from him who as yet were not sufficiently disposed to receive the naked truth: for he interpreted whatever was obscure in them to his disciples in private. To which practice of Jesus those words may be applied which we read in the Psalms, "I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old."

The multitude being separated, Jesus returned home, and his disciples came to him, desiring him to explain to them the similitude of the tares, which they did not thoroughly understand. To whom Jesus thus replied: "I am the sower of the good seed I spoke of: the field is the earth; the seed, they that hear the gospel, believe it, and live according to the rules of it; and shall therefore participate of the rewards of the kingdom of heaven. The tares are wicked men, who are every-where mixed with the good, and who shall have no share in the happiness of that kingdom; the enemy, who privately sowed tares among the wheat, is the evil spirit, who, by private artifices, seeks to undermine and corrupt men's integrity; the harvest is the end of the world, and the last judgment; and the reapers are the angels. Like as the tares, therefore, are gathered together, in order to be burnt, while the wheat is carefully stored up, thus shall I send the angels as executioners of my will, to separate the good from the bad, that these may be thrown into the fire; that is a place allotted for them to endure the torments they have merited, where all their lamentations and complaints of the misery of their condition shall be vain and fruitless to them; while the former are admitted into the seats of eternal bliss, where they shall shine like the sun in its greatest lustre.

"I might also compare the doctrine of the gospel to treasures formerly hid in the ground and concealed for a long time, but at last discovered by a passenger, who, though he was extremely glad of his good fortune, yet is afraid of discovering the place in which this treasure lies: and, not being able to carry it off privately, dissembling his joy, sells all he is worth, if it be necessary, on purpose to buy that field, that he may privately dig it up and secure it from being seized by the lord of the manor. Surely you ought to shew as great concern for your salvation; and, if the case require it, your interest would consist in parting with every thing, rather than to fail of the knowledge of my evangelical doctrine, though it hath been so long concealed, and as yet is not much celebrated among men.—A jeweller having met with a diamond of extraordinary value, by the purchase of which he hopes to make his fortune, sells all his other jewels, if his stock of money be not sufficient, on purpose to procure

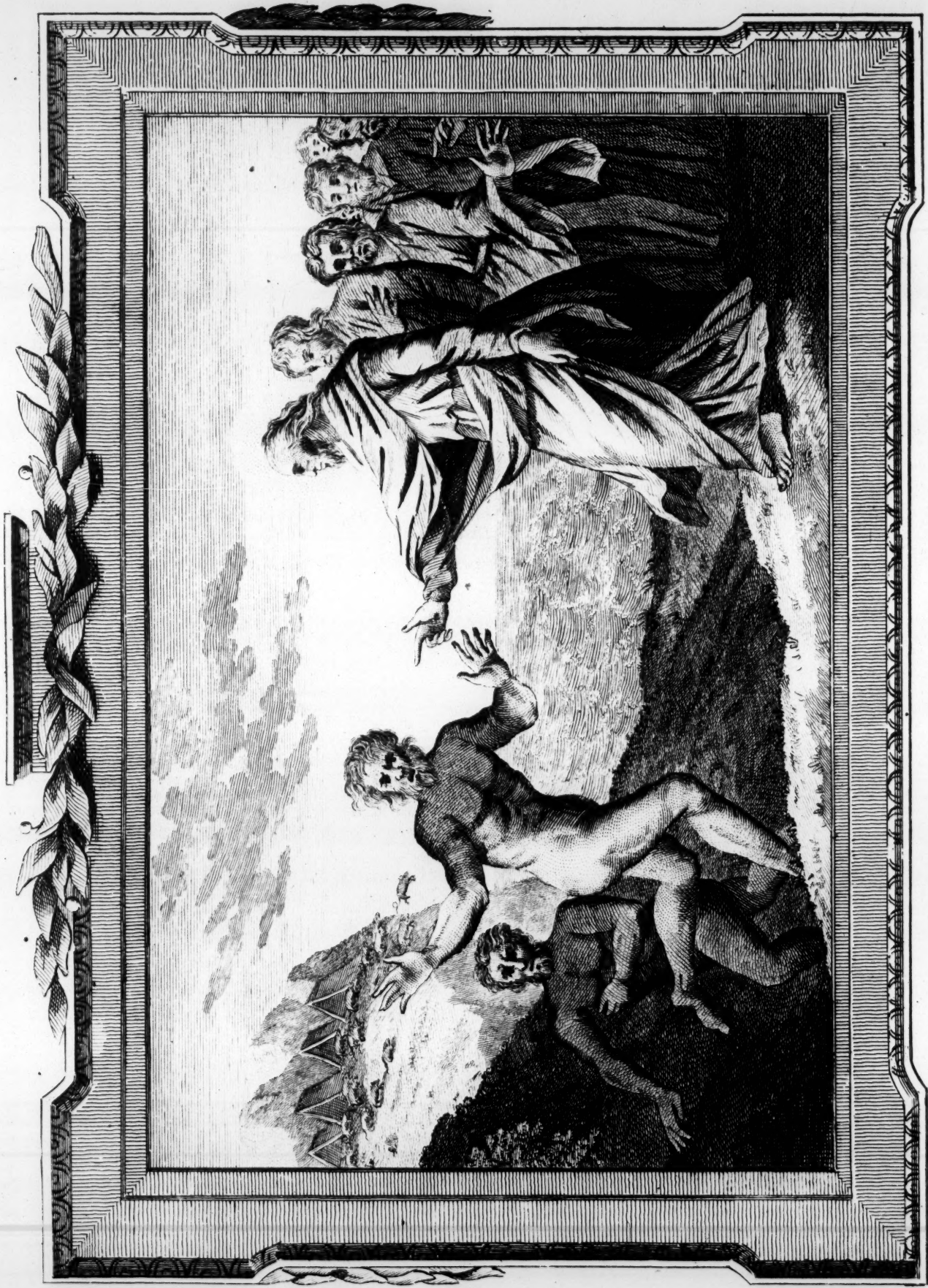
procure that one diamond. Thus it fares with those who hear, and embrace my gospel; rather than miss an occasion of being acquainted with its divine precepts, and leading a life answerable thereto, they will run the hazard of losing all they are worth in this world.---The preaching of the gospel is like to a net, which, being let down into the sea, incloses a vast number of all sorts of fishes. The fishermen, perceiving their net full, drag it to shore, and, preserving the good for service, throw away the refuse. In like manner, shall it happen at the day of judgment: the angels shall separate the good men from the bad, with whom they have been mixed in my church till now; and shall cast the bad into a furnace of fire, that is, a place where they shall be justly punished by God, and where there shall be nothing heard but miserable groans and woful lamentations."

When Jesus had done speaking, he asked the apostles whether they understood the meaning of these parables? which they answering in the affirmative, he told them, that they, and all who, like them, were acquainted not only with the doctrine of Moses and the prophets, but with his also, resembled a master of a family, who, having the last year's and this year's fruit, made use of both upon occasion, for the sustenance of his family." And after he had pronounced these parables, partly before the multitude, partly to his disciples alone, at Capernaum, or the country adjoining unto it, he left those parts. The same day in which Jesus delivered these parables, towards the evening, being on the western side of the lake of Gennesareth, together with his disciples, he ordered them to get a ship in readiness, to transport them to the other side towards Gadara. Being ready to go on shipboard, there came a lawyer to him, declaring he was willing to follow him whithersoever he went, imagining in all likelihood he was bound to some place where he might advance his fortune. Jesus thereupon told him, that all places here on earth were alike to him: that the foxes had holes, and the birds had trees wherein to shelter themselves; that the most miserable men had some house to repair to; but that, for his part, he had not any place to retire to, nor where he could entertain his followers: by those words, he admonished his disciples, not to hope for his establishing an earthly government among them, nor to hanker after the profits that usually attend it.

Another disciple came to him at the same time, professing his readiness to follow him all his life-time; but desired he would permit him to continue with his aged father till his death, and then, after he had buried him, he would return to Jesus. Our Lord thereupon, to put him in mind that the concerns of heaven were to be preferred before all worldly affairs, and that he ought to make use of the present opportunity that he might not fail of the happiness he proposed, thus answered him: "Follow me, and leave the management of the funeral rites to those who may justly be termed dead in respect of the spiritual life of the soul, that is, a strict conformity of mind to the gospel purity."

The multitude being afterwards dismissed, Jesus went on board, together with his apostles, and several other vessels followed him. When he was at some distance from the shore, there arose a sudden storm of wind, that the little vessel in which Jesus was, together with his disciples, was in a short space almost full of water, and thereby in danger of being sunk. All this while Jesus was asleep on the stern of the ship; but his apostles, concerned for the danger they were all in, awakened him, and begged that he would not suffer them to perish in his company. Jesus, as soon as he awaked, with a loud voice commanded the wind to cease, and the sea to be still: which words were no sooner pronounced, than the wind abated, and there ensued so great a calm, that they were forced to make use of their oars. Jesus then reproached his apostles with their unreasonable fear in his presence, and their mean notions concerning the power and truth of God; since the many miracles, of which they had been eye-witnesses, might have given them to understand how much they were under God's immediate care, and that therefore they might hope for security in the greatest tempest. But they, struck with admiration, mixed with terror, inquired one of another what sort of power this was with which Jesus was invested,





The UNCLEAN SPIRITS cast out.

invested, and which was extended to an absolute authority over the winds and waves, the like to which they had never before heard of.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DEVILS, BY CHRIST'S PERMISSION, ENTER INTO THE SWINE. MATTHEW CALLED. BLOODY ISSUE HEALED. JAIRUS'S DAUGHTER RAISED FROM THE DEAD. RULER'S SON CURED. THE DUMB AND BLIND MEN BOTH SEE AND SPEAK. JOHN THE BAPTIST BEHEADED.

NOT long after Jesus had, in the wonderful manner before-mentioned, quelled the raging of the tempest, he landed, with his disciples, on the eastern side of the lake, not far from Gadara, a town inhabited by heathens, and situated on the side opposite to Galilee. Jesus had no sooner landed at this place, but there met him two men possessed with evil spirits, naked, and who dwelt among the sepulchres hard by. They had been often bound with chains and fetters, and as often broke them; and, being impatient of all restraint, they made their abode among the tombs, from whence they commonly set upon those who passed by; which had made that road unfrequented. In these places they lived night and day, raging mad, and making dreadful outcries; not only molesting passengers, but tearing and cutting themselves with stones in a most shocking manner. These, perceiving Jesus at a distance, being actuated by the evil spirits, ran towards him, and, falling down at his feet, cried out, "What have we to do with thee, O Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? We adjure thee by thy heavenly Father not to torment us, since the time in which he has decreed we shall be punished, is not yet come: do not trouble us till that time come." These words were pronounced by the evil spirits, who made use of the organs of those miserable persons that had been a long time possessed by them, because Jesus had commanded them to go out, taking pity on the calamitous condition of those poor wretches; for, as we have observed, they had been possessed a long time, and could not be bound with any chains or fetters; but the dæmons, breaking through all obstacles, hurried them away into these deserts.

Jesus, that his disciples might have some notion of the great misery of those men, and withal of the greatness of the benefit he was determined to confer upon them, asked the evil spirits by what name they were called. They told him, their name was Legion, because that many evil spirits had entered into them at the same time. And they vehemently besought Jesus not to banish them from those parts, nor to send them to the place of torment. It happened that there was a herd of swine feeding not far off, at the foot of the mountains: the dæmons, therefore, intreated Jesus that, if he compelled them to depart out of the bodies of the men, he would permit them to enter into those of the swine, designing, in all likelihood, by the destruction of the swine, to alienate from him the minds of the Gadarenes, to whom they belonged, lest the miraculous recovery of those two men should persuade many to believe his gospel. Now Jesus, to make trial of the moral qualities of the inhabitants of Gadara, and to see whether they would be more affected with the loss of their swine than with the recovery of the afflicted men, and the hearing of his doctrine, granted the request of the dæmons; who, making use of this permission, entered into the swine, which precipitated themselves from the tops of the rocks into the lake, where they were all drowned, being about two thousand in number, the loss of which no doubt the Gadarenes would greatly resent.

The swineherds, who had seen the accident, ran to the town in a great fright, everywhere divulging this loss, and also the miracle wrought upon the men that had been possessed. This news filled all the inhabitants with astonishment, and a desire of being satisfied of the truth of what these men had related to them. Thereupon they came out in a body towards Jesus, and near him saw, with amazement, the two men who had

been possessed by the dæmons quietly reposing themselves, cloathed, and in a sound mind; and all that were present confirmed to them the story of the swineherds, how the dæmons had been cast out by the command of Jesus, and of the herd of swine's being drowned in the lake. The thing being thus made manifest, the whole city came out to Jesus, and in a body intreated him to depart out of their coasts, greatly apprehending such another misfortune.

Let us now offer some edifying reflections on this astonishing miracle. We do not any where find so furious a dæmoniac as this amongst the Gergesenes: Satan is most tyrannical, where he is most obeyed. Christ no sooner sailed over the lake, than he was met by two possessed Gadarenes: the extreme rage of the one drowned the speech of the other: yet in the midst of all that cruelty of the evil spirit, there was sometimes a cessation of it, if not an intermission of vexation. If oftentimes Satan caught him, then, sometimes, in the same violence, he caught him not. No thanks are due to that malignant one, who, as he was indefatigable in his executions, so no less unmeasurable in his malice; but to the merciful over-ruling of God, who, in a gracious respect to the weakness of his poor creatures, limits the spiteful attempts of that immortal enemy, and takes off this mastiff, while we may take breath.

The possessed is bound, as with the invifible fetters of Satan, so with the material chain of the inhabitants. What can bodily force prevail against a spirit? Yet they endeavour at this restraint of the man, whether out of charity, or justice: charity, that he might not hurt himself; justice, that he might not hurt others: no persons so much befriend the dæmoniac as they who bind him; neither may the spiritually possessed be otherwise handled; for though this act of the enemy be plausible, and, to appearance, pleasant, yet there is more danger in this dear and smiling tyranny. Two sorts of chains are fit for outrageous sinners; namely, good laws, impartial executions; that they may not hurt, and that they may not be hurt to eternal death.

These iron chains are no sooner fastened than broken. There was more than an human power in this breaking asunder; it is not hard to conceive the utmost of nature in this kind of actions: Sampson does not break the cords and ropes, like a thread of tow; but God, by Sampson. The man does not break these chains, but the spirit. How strong is the arm of those evil angels! how far transcending the ordinary course of nature! They are not called powers for nothing: what flesh and blood could but tremble at the evident inequality of this match, if herein the merciful protection of our God did not the rather magnify itself, that so much strength, joined with so much malice, hath not prevailed against us! In spite of both, we are in safe hands: he that so easily broke the iron fetters, can never break the adamant chain of our faith; in vain do the chafing billows of hell beat upon that rock, whereon we are built: and though these brittle chains of earthly metal are easily broken by him, yet the sure tempered chain of God's eternal decree he can never break; that almighty Arbiter of heaven and earth and hell hath chained him up in the bottomless pit, and hath so restrained his malice, that (but for our good) we cannot be tempted; we cannot be foiled, but for a glorious victory.

Alas! it is no otherwise with the spiritually possessed. The chains of restraint are commonly broken by the fury of wickedness: what are the respects of civility, fear of God, fear of men, wholesome laws, careful executions to the desperately licentious, but as cobwebs to an hornet! Let these wild dæmoniacs know that GOD hath provided chains for them, that will hold, even "everlasting chains under darkness;" these are such as must hold the devils themselves (their masters) unto the judgment of the great day; how much more, then, those impotent vassals! Oh that men would suffer themselves to be bound to their good behaviour by the sweet and easy persuasions of their duty to their God, and the care of their own souls, that so they might rather be bound up in the bundle of life.

It was not for rest that these chains were torn off, but for more motion: this prisoner runs away from his friends, but he cannot run away from his gaoler: he is now carried into the wilderness; not by mere external force, but by internal impulsion; carried by the

the same power that unbound him, for the greater exercise of his tyranny, for the horror of the place, for famishment of his body, for the privation of all means of resistance. Solitary deserts are the delights of Satan. It is an unwise zeal that moves persons to do that to themselves, from a conceit of merit and holiness, which the devil wishes to do to us for a punishment, and means of temptation. The evil spirit is for solitariness; God is for society: "He dwells in the assembly of his saints, yea, there he hath a delight to dwell." Why should not we account it our happiness that we may have leave to dwell where the author of all happiness loves to dwell?

There cannot be any misery incident to us, whereof our gracious Redeemer is not both conscious and sensible; without any intreaty, therefore, of the miserable demoniac, or suit of any friend, the God of spirits takes pity on his distress; and, from no motion but his own, commands the evil spirit to come out of the man. O admirable precedent of mercy, preventing our requests, exceeding our thoughts, forcing favours upon our impotence; doing that for us, which we should desire, and yet cannot. If men, upon our earnest solicitations, would give us their best aid, it were a just praise of their bounty: but it well became thee, O God of mercy, to go without force, to give without suit: and do we think thy goodness is impaired by thy glory? If thou wert thus commiserative upon earth, art thou less so in heaven? How dost thou now take notice of all our complaints, of all our infirmities! How doth thine infinite pity find a way to redress them! What evil can befall us, which thou knowest not, feelest not, relievest not! How safe are we that have such a Guardian, such a Mediator in heaven!

Not long before had our Saviour commanded the winds and waters, and they could not but obey him: now, he speaks in the same manner to the evil spirit; he intreats not, he persuades not, but commands. Command argues superiority; He only is infinitely stronger than the strong one in possession: else, where powers are matched, though with some inequality, they contend for the victory, and will not yield without resistance. There are no fewer sorts of dealing with Satan, than with men: some have dealt with him by suit, as the old Satanic heretics, and the present Indian savages, sacrificing to him, that he may not hurt them: others by covenant, engaging their service upon his assistance, as witches and magicians: others by adjuration, as the sons of Sceva, and modern exorcists, unwarrantably addressing him by a higher name than their own: none ever offered to deal with Satan by a direct and primary command, but the God of spirits: the great archangel, when the strife was about the body of Moses, commanded not, but imprecated rather, "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan!" it is only the God that made this spirit an angel of light, that can command him now he hath made himself the prince of darkness. If any created power dare to usurp a word of command, he laughs at their presumption, and knows them to be his vassals, whom he pretends to fear as his lords. It is thou only, O Saviour, at whose beck those stubborn principalities of hell yield and tremble: no wicked man can be so much a slave to Satan, as Satan is to thee; the interposition of thy grace may defeat the dominion of Satan: thy rule is absolute, and capable of no controul. What need we to fear, while we are under so omnipotent a Commander? The waves of the deep rage horribly, yet the Lord is stronger than they: let those principalities and powers do their worst: those mighty adversaries are under the command of him who loved us so well as to bleed for us. What can we now doubt of? His power, or his will? How can we profess him a God, and doubt of his power? How can we profess him a Saviour, and doubt of his will? He both can and will command those infernal powers: we are no less safe, than they are malicious.

The devil saw Jesus by the eyes of the dæmoniac; for the same saw, that spake; but it was the evil spirit, that said, "I beseech thee, torment me not:" it was sore against his will that he saw so dreadful an object; the over-ruling power of Christ dragged the foul spirit into his presence. Guiltiness would fain keep out of sight: the members of so woful a head shall ere long call on the hills and rocks to hide them from the face of the Lamb; such lion-like terrors there is in that mild face, when it looks upon wickedness: neither shall it be one day the least part of the torment of the damned, to see the most lovely spectacle that heaven can afford; he from whom they fled in his offers of grace,
shall

shall be so much more terrible, as he was and is more gracious. I wonder not therefore that the devil, when he saw Jesus, cried out; I could neither wonder that he fell down, that he worshipped him: that which the proud spirit would have had Christ to have done to him, in his great contest with him, the same he now does to Christ, fearfully, servilely, by force. Who may henceforth boast of the external homage he performs to the Son of God, when he sees Satan himself fall down and worship? What comfort can there be in that which is common to us with devils; who as they believe and tremble, so they tremble and worship? The outward bowing is the body of the action, the disposition of the soul is the soul of it; therein lies the difference between the counterfeit stoopings of wicked men and spirits: the religious heart "serves the Lord in fear, and rejoices in him with trembling." What it doth is in way of service; in service to his Lord, whose sovereignty is his comfort and protection; in the fear of a son, not of a slave; in fear tempered with joy; in a joy, but allayed with trembling; whereas the prostration of wicked men and devils is only an act of form, or of force: as to their judge, as to their tormentor, not as to their Lord; in mere servility, not in reverence; in an uncomfortable dulness, without the least delight; in a perfect horror, without capacity of joy: these worship without thanks, because they fall down without the true affections of sincere worshippers.

They who wonder to see the devil upon his knees, would be much more amazed to hear what came from his mouth, "Jesus, thou son of the most high God!" A confession, which if we should hear without mention of the author, we should ask from what saint it came. Behold the same name given to Christ by the devil, which was formerly given him by the angel, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus;" that awful name, whereat every knee shall bow, in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, is called upon, by this prostrate devil: and lest that should not import enough, (since others have had this name in type), he adds for full distinction, "Thou Son of the most high God:" the good Syrophænician and blind Bartimeus could say, "Thou Son of David:" it was well to acknowledge the true descent of his pedigree, according to the flesh; but this infernal spirit looks aloft, and fetcheth his line out of the highest heavens. "The Son of the most high God:" the famous confession of the zealous apostle (who honoured him with a new name to immortality) was no other than, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God:" and what other do I hear from the lips of a fiend? More divine words could not fall from the highest saint: nothing hinders but that the veriest miscreant on earth, yea, the foulest devil in hell may speak holily: no judgment can be formed from loose sentences: if so, Peter might have been damned for a Satan in denying, forswearing, and cursing; and the devil should have been set up for a saint, in confessing, "Jesus thou Son of the most high God!" Fond hypocrite! that pleasest thyself in talking well, hear this devil; and when thou canst speak better than he, expect to fare better; but in the mean time know, that a smooth tongue, and a foul heart, are intitled to double judgments.

Let curious heads dispute, whether the devil knew Christ to be God: in this I dare believe himself, though in nothing else; he knew what he believed, what he believed, that he confessed, "Jesus, thou Son of the most high God!" to the confusion of those semi-Christians, that have either held doubtfully, or ignorantly mis-known, or blasphemously denied what the very devils have professed. How little can a bare speculation avail us in these cases of divinity! So far this devil hath attained, but to no ease, no comfort. Knowledge alone does but puff up; it is love that edifies: if there be not a sense of our sure interest in this Jesus, a power to apply his merits, and obedience to his will, we are in no respect safer or better; we are only so much the wiser, to understand who shall condemn us.

This part of the clause was spoken like a saint, "Jesus, thou Son of the most high God!" the other part like a devil, "What have I to do with thee? If the disclaiming him were universal, the latter words would contradict the former: for while he confesses Jesus to be the Son of the most high God, he withal confesses his own inevitable subjection. Wherefore would he beseech, if he were not obnoxious? He cannot, he dare not say, "What hast thou to do with me?" but, "What have I to do with thee?"

Others

Others indeed I have vexed, thee I fear; in respect then of any violence, of any personal provocation, "What have I to do with thee?" And dost thou ask, O thou evil spirit, what hast thou to do with Christ, while thou vexest a servant of Christ? Hast thou thy name from knowledge, and yet so mistakest him whom thou confessest, as if nothing could be done to him, but what immediately concerns his own person? Hear that great and just Judge sentencing upon his dreadful tribunal: "Inasmuch as thou didst it unto one of these little ones, thou didst it unto me:" it is an idle blunder to sever the sense of an injury done to any of the members, from the head.

He that had humility enough to kneel to the Son of God, hath boldness enough to expostulate, "Art thou come to torment us before our time?" Whether it were that Satan, who is accustomed to enjoy the torment of sinners, whose music it is to hear our shrieks and gnashings, held it no small piece of his torment to be restrained in the exercise of his tyranny; or, whether the very presence of Christ were painful to him; for, the guilty spirit looks for terrible things, and cannot behold the Judge or executioner without a renovation of horror; or, whether that (as himself professeth) he were now in a fearful expectation of being commanded down into the deep, for a further degree of actual torment, which he thus deprecates.

There are tortures adapted to the very spiritual natures of evil angels: men that are led by sense, have easily granted that the body is subject to torment, who yet have not so readily conceived this to be incident to a spiritual substance; the Holy Ghost hath not thought fit to acquaint us with the particular manner of these invisible acts, being rather willing that we should herein fear, than inquire; but as all matters of faith, though they cannot be proved by reason (because they are in a higher sphere) yet afford an answer able to stop the mouth of all reason that dare bark against them (since truth cannot be opposite to itself), so is this of the sufferings of spirits: there is therefore both an intentional torment incident to spirits, and a real: for, as in blessedness the good spirits find themselves joined to the chief good; and hereupon feel a perfect love of God, and unspeakable joy in him, and rest in themselves; so, on the contrary, the evil spirits perceive themselves eternally excluded from the presence of God, and see themselves settled in a woful darkness; and from the sense of this separation arises a horror not to be expressed nor conceived. How many men have we known to torment themselves with their own thoughts! There needs no other gibbet for them than that which their troubled spirit had erected in their own heart; and if some pains begin at the body, and from thence afflict the soul in a copartnership of grief; yet others arise immediately from the soul, and draw the body into a participation of misery: why may we not therefore conceive mere and separate spirits capable of such an inward excruciation?

Besides which I hear the Judge of men and angels say, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" and I hear the prophet say, "Tophet is prepared of old." If with fear, and without curiosity, we may look upon those flames; why may we not attribute a spiritual nature to that more than natural fire? In the end of the world, the elements shall be dissolved by fire; and if the pure quintessential matter of the sky, and the element of fire itself, shall be dissolved by fire, then that last fire shall be of another nature than that which it consumeth: what hinders then but that the omnipotent God hath from eternity created a fire of another nature proportionable even to spiritual essences? Or why may we not distinguish concerning fire as it is itself, a bodily creature, and, as it is an instrument of God's justice, so working, not by any material virtue or power of its own, but by a certain height of supernatural efficacy, to which it is exalted by the omnipotence of that supreme and righteous Judge? Or lastly, why may we not conceive, that though spirits have nothing material in their nature, which that fire should work upon, yet by the judgment of the almighty Arbiter of the world, justly willing their torment, they may be made most sensible of pain.

There is no time wherein the evil spirits are not tormented: there is a time wherein they expect to be tormented yet more: "Art thou come to torment us before our time?" They knew that the last assizes are the prefixed term of their full execution; which they also understood to be not yet come: for though they knew not when the

day of judgment should be (a point concealed from the glorious angels of heaven); yet they knew when it should not be; and therefore they say, "Before the time." Even the very evil spirits confess, and fearfully look for, a set day of universal sessions. They believe less than devils, who either doubt of or deny that day of final retribution.

Yet so doth this evil spirit expostulate, that he sues, "I beseech thee, torment me not." The world is well changed since Satan's first onset upon Christ: then he could say, "If thou be the Son of God;" now, "Jesus, thou Son of the most high God:" then, "All these will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me;" now, "I beseech thee, torment me not:" the same Power can, when he pleases, change the note of the tempter, to us. How happy are we who have such a Redeemer as can command the devils to their chains! Oh consider this, ye lawless sinners, that have said, "Let us break his bonds, and cast his cords from us." However the Almighty suffers you, for a judgment, to have free scope to evil, and ye can now impotently resist the revealed will of your Creator; yet the time shall come when ye shall see the very masters whom ye have served, (the powers of darkness) unable to avoid the vengeance of God; "How much less shall man strive with his Maker; man, whose breath is in his nostrils, whose house is clay, whose foundation is the dust!"

It pleased our holy Saviour not only to let fall words of command upon this spirit, but to interchange some speeches with him: all Christ's actions are not for example. It was the error of our grandmother Eve to hold a conference with Satan: that God, who knows the craft of that old serpent, and our weak simplicity, hath charged us not to inquire of an evil spirit: surely, if the disciples returning to Jacob's well wondered to see Christ talk with a woman, well may we wonder to see him talking with an unclean spirit.

Before, the devil had spoken singly of himself, "What have I to do with thee?" and, "I beseech thee torment me not:" our Saviour yet, knowing that there was a multitude of devils lurking in that breast, who dissembled their presence, wrests it out of the spirit by this interrogation, "What is thy name?" Now those wicked ones can no longer hide themselves. He that asked the question, forced the answer, "My name is Legion." The author of discord hath borrowed a name of war; from that military order of discipline (by which the Jews were subdued) doth the devil fetch his denomination: they were many, yet they say, "My name," not, "Our name;" though many, they speak as one, they act as one, in this possession: there is a wonderful unanimity even betwixt evil spirits; that kingdom is not divided, for then it could not stand: I am not surprised that wicked men so conspire in evil, and that there is such unanimity in the broachers and abettors of errors, when I see those devils, which are many in substance, are one in name, action, and habitation. Who can too much boast of unity, when it is incident to wicked spirits? All the praise of concord is in the subject; if that be holy, the consent is angelical; if sinful, devilish.

Legion imports order, number, conflict. 1. Order, in that there is a distinction of regiment, a subordination of officers. Though in hell there be confusion of faces, yet not confusion of degrees. 2. Number; they who have reckoned a legion at the lowest, have counted it six thousand; others have more than doubled it, though here it is not strictly meant, but figuratively, yet the letter of it implies multitude. How fearful is the consideration of the number of apostate angels! And if a legion can attend one man, how many must we needs think are they, who all the world over are employed in the punishment of the wicked, the exercise of the good, the temptation of both? It cannot be supposed there is any place or time wherein we may be secure from the onsets of these enemies: be sure, ye lewd men, ye can want no incitement to evil, and no torment for it: be sure, ye godly, ye shall not want combatants to try your strength and skill: awaken, then, your courage to resist, and stir up your hearts, make sure the means of your safety. There are more with us than against us: the God of heaven is with us: oh that we may be with him! and our angels behold the face of God: if every devil were a legion, we are safe: "Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

death, we may fear no evil:" thou, O Lord, shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of our enemies, and thy right hand shall save us.

Elisha's servant, when his eyes were opened, saw troops of spiritual soldiers, which before he discerned not: if the eyes of our souls be once enlightened by supernatural knowledge, and the clear beams of faith, we shall as plainly discover the invisible powers of wickedness, as now our bodily eyes see heaven and earth. They exist, though we see them not; we cannot be safe from them, if we do not only acknowledge but oppose them.

The devils are now become great suitors to Christ: that he would not command them into the deep; that he would permit their entrance into the swine. What is this deep but hell? both for the utter separation from the face of God, and for the impossibility of any passage to the region of rest and glory? The very evil spirits, then, fear and expect a further degree of torment: they know themselves reserved in those chains of darkness for the judgment of the great day: there are the same wages due to their sins and to ours; neither are the wages paid till the work be ended; they tempting men to sin, must needs sin grievously in tempting; as with us men, they who mislead into sin, offend more than the actors; not till the measure, therefore, of their wickedness be full, shall they receive the full measure of their condemnation. If at this day they tremble at this deep, what shall I say of those men who fear it not? It is hard for men to believe their own unbelief: if they were persuaded of this fiery dungeon, this bottomless deep, wherein every sin shall receive an horrible portion with the damned, durst they so stretch forth their hands to wickedness? No man will put his hand into a fiery crucible, to fetch gold thence, because he knows it will burn him: did we as truly believe the everlasting burning of that infernal fire, we dare not fetch pleasures, or profits, out of the midst of those flames.

This degree of torment they grant in Christ's power to command; they knew his power irresistible; had he therefore but said, "Back to hell, whence ye came," they could no more have staid upon earth, than they can now climb into heaven. O the wonderful dispensing power of the Almighty, who, though he could command all the evil spirits down to their dungeons in an instant, so as they should have no more opportunity of temptation, yet thinks fit to retain them upon earth: it is not out of weakness, or impotence of that divine hand, that wicked spirits tyrannize here upon earth, but out of the most wise and most holy ordination of God, who knows how to turn evil into good; how to fetch good out of evil, and by the worst instruments to bring about his most just decrees. Oh that we could adore that awful and infinite power, and cheerfully cast ourselves upon that Providence which keeps the keys even of hell itself, and either lets out or sends back the devils to their places!

Their other suit hath something strange in moving it, more in the grant; "That they might be suffered to enter into the herd of swine." It was their ambitious aim at some mischief that brought forth this desire: that since they might not vex the body of man, they might yet afflict men in their goods. The malice of these envious spirits reacheth from us to ours: it is fore against their wills, if we be not every way miserable: if the swine were legally unclean for the use of the table, yet they were naturally good: had not Satan known them useful for man, he had never desired their ruin: but as fencers will seem to fetch a blow at the leg, when they intend it at the head; so doth this devil, while he drives at the swine, he aims at the souls of these Gadarenes: by this means, he hoped well (and his hope was not vain) to work in these Gergesenes a discontentedness at Christ, an unwillingness to entertain him, a desire of his absence; he meant to turn them into swine by the loss of their swine: it was not the rafters or stones of the house of Job's children that he bore the grudge at, but the owners; nor at the lives of the children, so much as the soul of their father. There is no affliction wherein he doth not strike at the heart; which, while it holds free, all other damages are light; but a wounded spirit (whether with sin or sorrow) who can bear? Whatever becomes of goods, or limbs, happy are we if (like wise soldiers) we guard the vital parts; while the soul is kept sound from impatience, from distrust, our enemy may afflict us, but he cannot hurt us.

There

There were sects among these Jews that denied the existence of spirits, of which they could not be more evidently, more powerfully convinced than by this event: now shall the Gadarenes see from what a multitude of devils they were delivered; and how easy it had been for the same power to have allowed these spirits to seize upon their persons, as well as their swine: neither did God this without a just purpose of their chastisement: his judgments are righteous, where they are most secret; though we cannot accuse these inhabitants of aught, yet he could; and thought good thus to afflict them: and if they had wanted grace to acknowledge it, it was no small favour of God that he would punish them in their swine for that which he might have avenged upon their bodies and souls: our goods are farthest off from us; if but in these we smart, we must confess that we find mercy.

Those spirits which would go into the swine by permission, go out of the man by command; they had staid long, and are ejected suddenly: the immediate works of God are perfect in an instant, and do not require the aid of time for their ripening.

No sooner are they cast out of the man, than they are in the swine: they will lose no time, but pass, without intermission, from one mischief to another: if they hold it a pain not to be doing evil, why is it not our delight to be ever doing good? The impetuosity was no less than the speed: "The herd was carried with violence from a steep place down into the lake, and was choaked." It is no small force that could do this; but if the swine had been so many mountains, these spirits, by God's permission, could have thus transported them: how easily can they carry those souls (which are under their power) to destruction! Unclean beasts, that wallow in the mire of sensuality, brutish drunkards, transforming themselves by excess, even they are the swine whom the legion carries headlong to the pit of perdition.

The wicked spirits have their wish; the swine are choked in the waves: what ease is this to them? Good God! that there should be any creature that seeks pleasure in destroying, in tormenting the good creatures of his Maker! This is the diet of hell: those fiends feed upon spite towards man so much the more, as he more resembles his Creator: towards all other living substances, so much more as they may be more useful to man. "The swine ran down violently." What a wonder that their keepers fled! that miraculous work which should have drawn them to Christ, drives them from him: they run with the news; their country comes in with clamour: "The whole multitude of the country about besought him to depart."

There was not a Gadarene found, that either dissuaded their companions, or opposed the motion: it is a sign that a people are given up to judgment, when no man makes head against evil projects. Alas! what can one strong man do against a whole throng of wickedness! Yet this good comes of an unavailing resistance, that God forbears to plague where he finds but a spark of faith.

The Gadarenes sue to Christ for his departure: it is too much in their favour to attribute this to their modesty, as if they held themselves unworthy of so divine a guest. Why then did they fall upon this suit in a time of their loss? Why did they not blame themselves, and intimate a secret desire of that which they durst not beg? It is too much rigour to attribute it to the love of their hogs, and anger at their loss; then they had not intreated, but expelled him: it was their fear that moved this harsh suit: a servile fear of danger to their persons and to their goods; lest he that could so absolutely command the devils, should have set these tormentors upon them: lest their other dæmoniacks should be dispossessed with like loss. I cannot blame these Gadarenes that they feared: this power was worthy of trembling at: but their fear was unjust; they should have thus argued; "This man hath power over men, beasts, devils; it is good having him for our friend: his presence will be our safety and protection."

No son can be more like a father, than these Jews to their progenitors in the desert; that there might be no fear of degenerating into good, they also of old tempted God in the wilderness: first, they are weary of the Egyptian bondage, and are ready to fall out with God and Moses, for their stay in those furnaces: by ten miraculous plagues they are freed, and, going out of those confines, the Egyptians follow them, the sea is before

before them: now they are more afflicted with their liberty than their servitude: the sea yields way, the Egyptians are drowned; and now, that they are safe on the other shore, they tempt the providence of God for water; the rock yields it them: then, no less for bread and meat; God sends them manna and quails: they even loathe the food of angels: their present enemies in the way are vanquished, they whine at the means and measures used in their behalf, in the heart of Canaan: nothing from God but mercy; nothing from them but temptations.

Their true brood and successors both in nature and in sin had abundant proofs of Christ being the Messiah; if curing the blind, lame, diseased, deaf, dumb, ejecting devils, overruling the elements, raising the dead, could have been sufficient; yet still they must have a sign from heaven; and close all in the style of the tempter, "If thou be the Christ:" but the gracious heart discovers faith; even where it sees not, it believes; and where it sees but a little, it believes a great deal: neither doth it presume to prescribe to God what and how he shall work; but takes what it finds, and immoveably rests in what it takes. Any miracle, no miracle, serves enough for their assent who have built their faith upon the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

The number of the apostles was not yet full; one room is left void for a future occupant: who can but expect that it is reserved for some eminent person? and behold, Matthew the publican is the man. Oh the strange election of Christ! Those other disciples, whose calling is recorded, were from the fishing-boat, this from the toll-booth; they were unlettered, this infamous: the condition was not in itself sinful; but as the taxes which the Romans imposed on God's free people were odious, so the collectors, the farmers of them, were abominable: besides, it was hard to hold that seat without oppression, without exaction: one that best knew it, branded it with polling and sycophancy: and now, behold a griping publican called to the family, to the apostleship, to the secretariship of God! Who can despair, in consciousness of his unworthiness, when he sees this pattern of the free bounty of him that calleth us? Merits do not carry it in the gracious election of God; but his mere favour. There sat Matthew the publican, busy in his counting-house, reckoning up the sums of his rentals; taking up his arrearages, and wrangling for denied duties; and so little thought of a Saviour, that he did not so much as look at his passing; but, "Jesus, as he passed by, saw a man sitting at the receipt of custom, named Matthew:" as if this prospect had been sudden and casual; "Jesus saw him in passing by." O Saviour, before the world was, thou sawest that man sitting there; thou sawest thine own passing that way; thou sawest his call in thy passing; and now thou goest purposely thither, that thou mightest see and call. Nothing can be hid from that piercing eye, one glance whereof hath discerned a disciple in the cloaths of a publican: that habit, that shop of extortion, cannot conceal from thee a vessel of election: in all forms thou knowest thine own; and in thine own time shalt fetch them out of the disguises of their foul sins, or unfit conditions. What sawest thou, O Saviour, in that publican, that might either allure thine eye, or not offend it? What but an hateful trade, an evil eye, a griping hand, bloody tables, heaps of spoil! yet now thou saidst, "Follow me:" thou that saidst once to Jerusalem, "Thy birth and nativity is of the land of Canaan: thy father was an Amorite, thy mother an Hittite: thy navel was not cut, neither wert thou washed in water, to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all; thou wast not swaddled at all: none eye pitied thee, but thou wast cast out in the open fields, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born: and when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, Live; yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live." Now also, when thou passedst by, and sawest "Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom," thou saidst to him, "Follow me:" the life of this publican was so much worse than the birth of that forlorn Amorite, as "Follow me" was more than "Live." What canst thou see in us, O God, but odious deformities, horrible sins, despicable miseries, yet doth it please thy mercy to say unto us both "Live," and "Follow me!"

The just man is the first accuser of himself: whom do we hear to blazon the shame of Matthew but his own mouth? Matthew the evangelist tells us of Matthew the publican:

can: his fellows call him Levi, as willing to lay their finger upon the spot of his unpleasing profession, which himself will not smother or palliate in the least, but publishes it to all the world in a thankful recognition of the mercy that called him: as liking well that his baseness should serve for a fit foil to set off the glorious lustre of his grace by whom he was elected: what matters it how vile we are, O God, so thy glory may be exalted in our abasement?

That word was enough, "Follow me;" spoken by the same tongue that said to the corpse at Nain, "Young man, I say to thee, Arise." He that said at first, "Let there be light," says now, "Follow me." That power sweetly inclines, which could forcibly command: the force is not more irresistible than the inclination. When the sun shines upon the icicles, can they choose but melt and fall? When it looks into a dungeon, can the place choose but be enlightened? Do we see the sucker drawing up straws to it, the load-stone iron, and do we wonder if the omnipotent Saviour, by the influence of his grace, attract the heart of a publican? "He arose, and followed him." We are all naturally averse from thee, O God; do thou but bid us "follow thee;" draw us by thy powerful word, and we shall run after thee. Alas! thou speakest, and we sit still: thou speakest by thine outward word to our ear, and we stir not: speak thou by the secret and effectual word of thy Spirit, to our heart; then the world cannot hold us down, Satan cannot stop our way, we shall "arise and follow thee."

It was not a more busy than gainful trade that Matthew abandoned to follow Christ into poverty: and now he cast away his counters, struck his tallies, crossed his books, and contemned his heaps of cash in comparison of that better treasure which he foresaw lie open in that happy attendance. If any acquisition be valued of us too dearly to be parted with, for Christ, we are more fit to be publicans than disciples. Our Saviour invites Matthew to a discipleship; Matthew invites him to a feast. The joy of his call makes him begin his abdication of the world, by providing a banquet.

Here was not a more cheerful thankfulness in the inviter, than a gracious humility in the guest: the new servant invites his master; the publican his Saviour, and is honoured with so blessed a presence. I do not find where Jesus was ever bidden to any table, and refused: if a pharisee, if a publican invited him, he made no hesitation to go: not for the pleasure of the dishes, what was that to him? but (as it was his meat and drink to do the will of his Father) for the benefit of winning others by his conversation. If he sat with sinners, he converted them; if with converts, he confirmed and instructed them; if with the poor, he fed them; if with the rich in substance, he made them richer in grace. At whose board did he ever sit, and left not his host a gainer? The poor bridegroom entertains him, and hath his water-pots filled with wine: Simon the pharisee entertains him, and hath his table honoured with the public pardon of a penitent sinner, with the heavenly doctrine of forgiveness of sins: Zaccheus entertains him, salvation came that day to his house, with the Author of it; that presence made the publican a son of Abraham; Matthew is recompensed for his feast with an apostleship; Martha and Mary entertain him, and, besides divine instruction, receive their brother from the dead. O Saviour, whether thou feast us, or we feast thee, in both of them is unspeakable blessedness!

Where a publican is the feast-master, it is no wonder if the guests be publicans and sinners; whether they came alone, out of the hope of that mercy which they saw their fellow had found, or whether Matthew invited them to be partners of that plentiful grace whereof he had tasted, I inquire not: publicans and sinners will flock together: the former hateful for their trade, the others for their vicious life. Common contempt hath wrought them to an unanimity, and sends them to seek mutual comfort in that society which all others held loathsome and contagious. Moderate correction humbles and shames the offender: whereas a cruel severity makes men desperate, and drives them to those courses whereby they are more dangerously infected. How many have gone into the prison faulty, and returned flagitious? If publicans were not sinners, they were not at all beholden to their neighbours.

What

What a table full was here! The Son of God beset with publicans and sinners: O happy publicans and sinners, that had found out their Saviour! O merciful Saviour, that disdained not publicans and sinners!

What sinner can fear to kneel before thee, when he sees publicans and sinners sit with thee? Who can fear to be offended at thy meekness and mercy, when thou didst not abhor to converse with the outcasts of men? Thou didst not despise the thief confessing upon the cross, nor the sinner weeping upon thy feet, nor the Canaanite crying to thee in the way, nor the blushing adulterers, nor the odious publican, nor the forswearing disciple, nor the persecutor of disciples, nor thine own executioners; how can we, then, be unwelcome to thee, if we come with tears in our eyes, faith in our hearts, restitution in our hands? O Saviour, our breasts are too often shut against thee, thy bosom is ever open to us; we are as great sinners as the associates of these publicans, why should we despair of room at thy table?

The squint-eyed Pharisees look athwart at all the actions of Christ; where they should admire his mercy, they cavil at his holiness; "They said to his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" They durst not say thus to the Master, whose answer (they knew) would soon have convinced them: this wind (they hoped) might shake the weak faith of the disciples: they speak where they may be most likely to hurt: all the crew of Satanical instruments have learnt this craft of their old tutor in paradise. We cannot reverence that man, whom we think unholy; Christ had lost the hearts of his followers, if they had entertained the least suspicion of his impurity; which the murmur of these envious Pharisees would fain insinuate: 'He cannot be worthy to be followed that is unclean; he cannot but be unclean that eateth with publicans and sinners:' proud and foolish Pharisees! Ye fast while Christ eats, ye fast in your houses, while Christ eats in other men's; ye fast with your own, while Christ feasts with sinners: but if ye fast in pride, while Christ eats in humility; if ye fast at home, for merit or popularity, while Christ feasts with sinners for compassion, for edification, for conversion, your fast is unclean, his feast is holy; ye shall have your portion with hypocrites, when those publicans and sinners shall be glorious.

When these censurers thought the disciples had offended, they speak not to them, but to their Master, "Why do thy disciples that which is not lawful?" now, when they thought Christ had offended, they speak not to him, but to the disciples. Thus, like true makebates, they go about to make a breach in the family of Christ, by separating the one from the other. The quick eye of our Saviour soon spied the design of their fraud, and therefore he takes the words out of the mouths of his disciples, into his own: they had spoken of Christ to the disciples; Christ answers for the disciples concerning himself, "The whole need not the physician, but the sick."

During this interview and argument between the blessed Jesus and the proud Pharisees, Jairus, ruler* of the synagogue, came to him, desiring him that he would help his daughter, who lay now at the point of death. He questioned not the abilities of the holy Jesus, but was confident that if he laid his hand upon her, she would recover. The forwardness of Jairus's faith claimed our Saviour's compassion, who was always more ready to grant than we to ask: therefore he straitway went with him to his house; to which as he was going, a woman met him that had been diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, without any hope of remedy from art or nature, and had consumed her fortune in expectation of a cure, but to no purpose. This woman having heard of the many miracles Jesus had wrought upon all diseased and possessed persons, upon the confident persuasion of a holy and strong faith, said, "If I might but touch his clothes, I shall be whole." The poor woman came trembling, full of hope and reverence; and

* There was among the Jews the less and greater Sanhedrin, or Consistory, Mat. v. 22. the former consisting of twenty-three judges in every city; the latter of seventy-two in Jerusalem. The greater Sanhedrin was made up of the chief priests and elders, or presbyters of the people, called often the elders of Israel, and the scribes of the people, Judges v. 21. they of the less consistory were called rulers, as here.

thinking that in the croud she might not be perceived, she gently touched his garment, and immediately her distemper was healed.

An afflicted patient laboured under an issue of blood: a disease that had not more pain than shame; nor more natural infirmity, than legal impurity. Time added to her grief; twelve long years had she languished under this woful complaint; diseases must needs get head by continuance: and so much the more both weaken nature, and strengthen themselves, by how much longer they afflict us. Thus it is in the soul; so in the state; vices, which are the sicknesses of both, when they grow inveterate, have a strong plea for their abode and uncontrollableness.

Yet more, to mend the matter, poverty (which is another disease) was superadded to her sickness: "She had spent all she had upon physicians;" while she had wherewith to take proper care of herself, and procure good attendance, choice diet, and all the succours needful under a distressful languishment, she could not but find some mitigation of her sorrow; but now want began to pinch her no less than her distemper, and helped to make her perfectly miserable.

Yet, could she have parted from her substance so as to procure ease, her complaint had been the less; could the physicians have given her, if not health, yet relaxation and relief from pain, her means had not been ill bestowed; but, on the other hand, "she suffered many things from them;" many an unpleasing potion, many tormenting operations did she endure from their hands; the remedy was as bad as the disease.

It were, however, pity but that this woman should have been thus sick; since the nature, continuance, cost, pain, incurableness of her disease, both sent her to seek Christ, and moved Christ to perform her cure. Our extremities drive us to the Saviour; his love draws him to be most present and helpful in our extremities; when we are forsaken of all succours and hopes, we are fittest for his assistance; never are we nearer help, than when we despair of help; there is no fear, no danger but in our own insensibility.

This woman was a stranger to Christ; it seems, she had never seen him; the report of his miracles had excited in her such a confidence of his power and mercy, that she said in herself, "If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be whole." The shame of her disease stopped her mouth from any verbal suit; had her condition been known, she had been shunned and abhorred, and disdainfully put back by all the beholders (as doubtless, where she was known, the law forced her to live apart). Now, she conceals her grief, her desire, and her faith: and only speaks (where she may be bold) within herself; "If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be whole."

According to her resolution, so is her practice; she touched, but she came behind to touch; whether for humility, or secrecy rather; as desiring to steal a cure, unseen, unnoticed. She was a Jewess, and therefore well knew that her touch was in this case no better than a pollution, with respect to her, but not to him: for on the one side, necessity is under no positive law; on the other, the Son of God was not capable of impurity; they who may be defiled with a touch, cannot heal with a touch: he that was above law, is not comprised in the law; be we never so unclean, he may heal us, we cannot infect him. O Saviour, my soul is sick and foul enough with the spiritual impurities of sin; let me, by the hand of faith, lay hold but upon the hem of thy garment (thy righteousness is thy garment), it shall be both clean and whole.

Who would not think but a man might lade up a dish of water out of the sea, unmixed? Yet that water (though much) is finite; those drops are within number; that art, which hath reckoned how many grains of sand would make up a world, could more easily compute how many drops of water would make up an ocean; whereas the mercies of God are absolutely infinite, and beyond all possibility of computation; and yet this bashful soul cannot steal one drop of mercy from this endless, boundless, bottomless sea of divine bounty, but is felt, and interrogated; "And Jesus said, Who touched me?"

Who now can forbear making the disciples' reply; "Who touched thee, Lord?" The multitude; dost thou ask concerning one, when thou art pressed by many? In the midst of a throng, dost thou ask, "Who touched me?"

Yea, but yet, "Some one touched me:" all thronged me; but one touched me: how unaccountable

unaccountable soever it may seem to sound; they that thronged me, touched me not; she only touched me that thronged me not, yea that touched me not: even so, O Saviour, others touched thy body with theirs; she touched thy hem with her hand, thy divine power with her soul.

What reason had our Saviour to challenge this touch? "Somebody touched me;" the multitude, in one voice, denied any touch at all: Peter, in another, affirmed an universal touching of the multitude: betwixt both, he who felt it can say, Somebody touched me. Not all, as Peter; not none, as said the multitude; but "Somebody." How then, O Saviour, how does it appear that somebody touched thee? For "I perceive virtue is gone out from me;" the effect proves the act; virtue gone out, evinces the touch; these two are, in thee, convertible; virtue cannot go out of thee but by a touch; and no touch can be of thee without virtue going out from thee. That which is a rule in nature, that every agent works by a contact, holds spiritually too; then do we re-act upon thee, when we touch thee by the hand of our faith, and by confidence in thee; and in both these, virtue goes out from thee to us: yet goes not so out, as that there is less in thee. In all bodily emanations, whose powers are but finite, it must needs follow that the greater part is sent forth, the less is reserved; but, as it is in the sun, which gives us light, yet nevertheless loses none by what it yields, its luminous property not being in the least impaired by that perpetual emission of bright beams; so, and much more, is it in thee, the Father of lights. Virtue could not go out of thee without thy knowledge, without thy sending; neither was it in a dislike, or in a grudging rebuke that thou saidst, "Virtue is gone out from me;" nothing could please thee better, than to feel virtue fetched out from thee by the faith of the receiver. It is the nature and praise of good to be communicative; none of us would be other than liberal of our little, if we did not fear it would be lessened by imparting; thou that knowest thy store so infinite, that participation doth only glorify, and not diminish it, canst not but be more willing to give, than we to receive. If we take but one drop of water from the sea, or one grain of sand from the shore, there is so much less; but were we capable of worlds of virtue and blessings from thy munificent hand, our enriching could not in any degree impoverish thee; thou, who hast declared it much better to give than to receive, canst not but give gladly. Fear not, O my soul, to take plentifully from this well, this ocean of mercy, which, the more thou takest, overflows the more.

But why then, O Saviour, why didst thou thus inquire, thus expostulate? Was it for thy own sake, that the glory of the miracle might thus come to light, which otherwise had been smothered in silence? Was it for Jairus's sake; that his depressed heart might be raised to confidence in thee, whose mighty power he saw proved by this cure, whose omniscience he saw manifested by the knowledge of the cure? or was it chiefly for the woman's sake; for the praise of her faith, for the securing of her conscience?

It was within herself that she said, "If I may but touch;" none could hear this voice of the heart, but he that made it. It was within herself that the cure was wrought; none of the beholders knew her complaint, much less her recovery; none observed her touch, none knew the occasion of her touch; what a pattern of powerful faith had we lost, if our Saviour had not called this act to trial! As her modesty hid her disease, so it would have hid her virtue; but Christ will not suffer this secrecy. Oh the marvellous but free dispensation of Christ! One while he enjoins silence to his recovered patients; and is troubled with their proclamation of his favours; another while, as here, he will not lose honour of a secret mercy, but fetches it out by his inquiry, by his profession; "Who hath touched me? for I perceive virtue is gone out from me." As we see, in the great work of his creation, he hath placed some stars in the midst of heaven, where they may be most conspicuous, others he hath set in the southern obscurity, obvious to but few eyes; in the earth, he hath planted some flowers and trees in the elegant gardens of the world; others, no less beautiful, in untracked woods, or wild deserts, where they are either not seen, or not regarded.

Yet even this great faith wanted not some weakness; it was a poor conceit in this woman, to think she might receive so sovereign a remedy from Christ, without his

regard, without his knowledge. Now, to the end she might see she had trusted to a power which was not more bountiful than sensible; and whose goodness did not exceed his apprehension, but was one that knew what he parted with, and willingly parted with that which he knew would be beneficial to so faithful a receiver, he can say, "Somebody hath touched me, for I perceive virtue is gone out from me." As there was an error in her thought, so in our Saviour's words there was a correction: his mercy will not let her run away with that secret offence. It is a great favour from God to take us in the manner, and to shame our closeness: we scour off the rust from a weapon that we esteem, and prune the vine we care for. Oh God, do thou ever find me out in my sin; and do not pass over my least infirmities, without giving me a feeling controul, and a conviction and sorrow for them.

Well might the woman think, he who can thus cure, and thus know his cure, can as well know my name, and discover my person, and shame and punish my ingratitude; with a pale face, therefore, and a trembling foot, she comes, and falls down before him, and humbly acknowledges what she had done, what she had obtained; "But the woman finding she was not hid," &c. Could she have perceived that she might sily have gone away with the cure, she had not confessed it; made God a loser of glory, and herself an unthankful receiver of so great a benefit.

It is no unusual thing for kindness to look sternly for the time, that it may endear itself more when it chuses to be discovered; with a severe countenance, therefore, did our Saviour look about him, and ask, "Who touched me?" When the woman comes in trembling, and confessing both her act and success, he clears up his brows, and speaks comfortably to her; "Daughter, be of good cheer, thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace." O sweet and seasonable word! fit for those merciful and divine lips; able to secure any heart, to dispel any fears! Still, O Saviour, thou dost thus to us; when we fall down before thee, in an awful dejectedness, thou rearest us up with a chearful and compassionate encouragement; when thou findest us bold and presumptuous, thou lovest to take us down; when humbled, it is enough to have laid us prostrate at thy feet; like that lion of Bethel, which worried the disobedient prophet, but guarded the poor ass that stood quaking before him; or, like some mighty wind, that blows over a tall elm or cedar with the same breath that it raises a stooping reed; or like some good physician, who finding the body obstructed and overcharged with ill humours, evacuates it, and when it is sufficiently weakened and exhausted, raises it up again with sovereign cordials.

It is thy word only which gives what the soul requires, comfort and confidence. Had any other shaken her by the shoulder, and cheared her up against those oppressive passions, it had been but waste wind; no voice but his, who hath power to forgive sin, can secure the heart from the feeling sense of sin, from the pangs of conscience: "In the midst of the sorrows of my heart, thy comforts, O Lord, thy comforts only have power to refresh my soul." Her cure was Christ's act, yet he gives the praise of it to her, "Thy faith hath made thee whole;" he said before, "Virtue is gone out from me;" now he acknowledges a virtue inherent in her; it was his virtue that cured her, yet he graciously ascribes this work to her faith: not that her faith did it, by way of merit, by way of efficiency, but by way of impetration; so much did our Saviour regard that faith which he had wrought in her, that he will honour it with the success of her cure. Such, and the same, is still the remedy of our spiritual diseases, our sins: by faith we are justified, by faith we are saved; thou only, O Saviour, canst heal us; thou wilt not heal us but by our faith; not as it issues from us, but as it appropriates thee; the sickness is ours, the remedy is ours: the sickness is our own by nature; the remedy ours by thy grace, both working and accepting it; our faith is no less from thee, than the cure is from our faith.

Oh happy dismissal, "Go in peace!" How unquiet had this poor soul formerly been! She had no outward peace with her neighbours; they shunned and abhorred her presence in this condition; yea they must do so: she had no peace in body; that was pained and vexed with so long and foul a disease. Much less had she peace in her mind, which

was grievously disquieted with sorrow for her sickness, with anger and discontentment at her torturing physicians, with fear of the continuance of so bad a guest; her soul, for the present, had no peace, from the sense of her guiltiness, in the management of this business; from the conceived displeasure of him to whom she came for comfort and redress. At once now doth our Saviour calm all these storms; and by one word and act restores to her peace with her neighbours, peace in herself; peace in body, in mind, in soul. "Go in peace:" even so, Lord, it was for thee only, who art the Prince of peace, to bestow thy peace where thou pleasest; our body, mind, soul, estate, is thine, whether to afflict or ease. In vain shall the world speak peace to us; except thou say to us as thou didst to this distressed soul, "Go in peace."

While Jesus yet spake, there came some messengers from the house of the prefect of the synagogue unto him, to acquaint him that his daughter was dead, and that it was to no purpose to trouble Jesus any farther, nor to bring him to a carcase without any manner of hope left. But Jesus bade the prefect, who was in tears upon this news, not to be afraid; telling him, that if he had a just sense of the power and goodness of God, his daughter should yet do well. He went on therefore towards the house, the multitude following him; but he permitted none to go into the house with him besides these three apostles, Peter, James, and John, together with the parents of the deceased. Being entered, he found the mourners and pipers, and other preparations for the funeral, ready according to the manner of the Jews. Jesus therefore told them, they need not make such a tumult, nor be so much concerned for their supposed loss; for that the maid was only in a sleep; that she should be quickly raised out of it, and that she should not die this time: but they began to jeer him, well knowing that she was really dead. Nevertheless, Jesus bid them all depart out of the room in which the girl lay, except her parents: then, taking her by the hand, "Maid," said he, "Arise." The words were no sooner pronounced, but her soul returned unto her, and she immediately got up, being about twelve years old. Then Jesus, to demonstrate that this was no magical illusion, and to convince them that she was perfectly recovered, ordered them to give her something to eat.

It appears that the only child of this ruler lay a dying when he came to solicit Christ's aid; and was dead while he solicited it: there was hope in her sickness; in her extremity, there was fear; in her death, despair and impossibility (as they thought) of help; "Thy daughter is dead, trouble not the Master." When we have to do with a mere finite power, this word were but just. He was a Prophet no less than a King, that said, "While the child was yet alive, I fasted, and wept, for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." But since thou hast to do with an omnipotent Agent, know now, O thou faithless messenger, that death can be no bar to his power: how well would it have become thee to have said, "Thy daughter is dead," but who can tell whether thy God and Saviour will not be gracious to thee that the child may revive? Cannot he, in whose hands are the issues of death, bring her back again?

Here were more manners than faith, "Trouble not the Master." Infidelity is all for ease, and thinks every good work tedious: that which nature accounts troublesome, is pleasing and delightful to grace. Is it any pain for an hungry man to eat? O Saviour, it was thy meat and drink to do thy Father's will; and his will was, that thou shouldst bear our griefs, and take away our sorrows: it cannot be thy trouble which is our happiness, so that we may still sue to thee.

The messenger could not so whisper his ill news but Jesus heard it: Jairus hears that he feared; and was now so heartless with the sad tidings, that he resolved not to trouble the Master, and thereby meant to take so much more trouble to himself; and would now yield to a hopeless sorrow. He, whose work it is to comfort the afflicted, rouseth up the dejected heart of that pensive father; "Fear not, believe only, and she shall be made whole." The word was not more chearful than difficult. Fear not. Who can be insensible of so great an evil? Where death hath once seized, who can but doubt he will keep

keep his hold; no less hard was it, not to grieve for the loss of an only child, than not to fear the continuance of the cause of that grief.

The sum of Jairus's first suit was for the health, not for the raising his daughter to life; now she was dead, he would, if he durst, have been glad to have asked her life; and now, behold, our Saviour bids him expect both her life and her health, "Thy daughter shall be made whole;" alive from her death, whole from her disease.

Thou didst not, O Jairus, thou daredst not ask so much as thou receivest. How glad wouldst thou have been, since this last news, to have had thy daughter alive, though weak and sickly! now thou shalt receive her not living only, but sound and vigorous. Thou dost not, O Saviour, measure thy gifts by our petitions, but by our wants, and thine own munificence.

This work might have been as easily done by an absent command; the power of Christ was there, while himself was away: but he will go personally to the place, that he might be confessed the author of so great a miracle. O Saviour, thou lovest to go to the house of mourning; thy chief pleasure is the comfort of the afflicted. What a confusion there is in worldly sorrow? The mother shrieks, the servants cry out; the people make lamentation, the minstrels howl, and strike dolefully; so that the ear might question whether the moanings or the instruments were more heavy. If ever expressions of sorrow sound well, it is when death leads the choir. Soon doth our Saviour charm this noise, and turns these unseasonable mourners (whether customary or serious) out of doors. Not that he dislikes music, whether to condole or comfort; but that he had life in his eye, and would have them know that he held these funeral ceremonies to be too early and too long before their time. "Give place, for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth:" had she been dead, she had but slept: now she was not dead, but asleep, because he meant this nap of death should be so short, and her awakening so speedy. Death and sleep are alike to him, who can cast whom he will into the sleep of death, and awaken when and whom he pleaseth out of that deadly sleep.

Before, the people and domestics of Jairus held Jesus for a prophet, now they took him for a dreamer; "Not dead, but asleep?" They that came to mourn cannot now forbear to laugh: 'have we piped at so many funerals, and seen and lamented so many corpses, and cannot we distinguish betwixt sleep and death? The eyes are set, the breath is gone, the limbs are stiff and cold: who ever died, if she does but sleep?' How easily may our reason, or sense, befooled us in divine matters! They who are competent judges in natural things, are ready to laugh God to scorn, when he speaks beyond their compass; and are by him justly laughed to scorn, for their unbelief: vain and faithless men! as if that unlimited power of the Almighty could not make good his own word; and turn either sleep into death, or death into sleep, at pleasure. Ere many minutes, they shall be ashamed of their error and incredulity.

There were witnesses enough of her death, there shall not be many of her restoring; three choice disciples, and the two parents, are only admitted to the view and testimony of this miraculous work: the eyes of those incredulous scoffers were not worthy of this honour; our infidelity makes us incapable of the secret favours, and the highest counsels of the Almighty.

What did these scorers think and say, when they saw him putting the minstrels and people out of doors? 'Doubtless the maid is but asleep; the man fears lest the noise might awaken her; we must speak and tread softly, that we disturb her not. What will he and his disciples do the while? Is it not to be feared they will startle her out of her rest?' They who are shut out from the participation of God's counsels, think all his words and projects no better than foolishness. But art thou, O Saviour, ever the more discouraged by the derision and censure of these scornful unbelievers? Because fools jeer thee, dost thou forbear thy work? Surely I do not perceive that thou heedest them, save for contempt; or regardest more for their words than their silence. It is enough that thine act shall soon honour thee, and convince them. "He took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise; and her spirit came again, and she arose straightway."

How

How could that touch, that call, be other than effectual? He who made that hand touched it: and he who shall once say, "Arise, ye dead," said now, "Maid, arise." Death cannot but obey him who is the Lord of life. The soul is ever equally in his hand who is the God of spirits; it cannot but go and come at his command: when he says, "Maid, arise," the now-dissolved spirit knows his office, his place, and instantly re-assumes that room which by his appointment it had left.

O Saviour! if thou do but bid my soul to arise from the death of sin, it cannot lie still; if thou bid my body to arise from the grave, my soul cannot but glance down from her heaven, and animate it: in vain shall my sin, or my grave, offer to withhold me from thee.

The maid revives; not now to languish for a time upon her sick-bed; and, by some faint degrees, to gather an insensible strength, but at once she arises from her death and from her couch: at once she puts off the fever, with her dissolution: she finds her life and her feet at once: at once she finds her feet and her stomach. "He commanded to give her meat." Omnipotence doth not use to go the pace of nature. All God's immediate works are (like himself) perfect: he that raised her supernaturally, could have so fed her; but it was never the purpose of his power to put ordinary means out of office.

In proceeding from Judæa towards Galilee, our Saviour preached in divers Jewish synagogues, and in all the towns through which he passed, instructed the people in the necessity of repentance, and a reformation of life. The fame of the great Preacher of Israel was not confined to the limits of the countries which he honoured with his divine presence, but was spread throughout all the adjacent territories.

While our Saviour was pursuing his journey from Judæa towards Cana, a noble inhabitant of Capernaum, who held a distinguished office under Herod the tetrarch, earnestly supplicated that he would visit and relieve his son, who was lying at the point of death. Lest it should be supposed he had not power to restore health, but in the presence of the afflicted, he declined going to Capernaum, but complied with the other part of the father's request, dismissing him with an assurance that his son was recovered. Upon inquiring as to the precise time when the unfavourable symptoms abated, he found that "the fever left him" immediately after Jesus had pronounced the youth to be restored to health, by saying, "Go thy way, thy son liveth."

We do not find Christ often attended with nobility; but in this place he is: it was some great peer, or some noted courtier, that was now a suitor to him for his dying son: earthly greatness is no defence against afflictions: we men shew respect and reverence to the mighty: disease and death know no faces of lords, or monarchs: could these be bribed, they would be too rich.

This noble ruler impatiently expects Christ's return into Galilee: the most eminent amongst men will be glad to hearken after Christ in their necessity: happy was it for him that his son was sick; he had not else been acquainted with his Saviour; his soul had continued sick of ignorance and unbelief. Why doth our good God send us pain, losses, opposition, disappointments, but that he may be sought to? Are we afflicted, whither should we go but to Cana, to seek Christ? whither but to the Cana of heaven, where our water of sorrow is turned to the wine of gladness; to that omnipotent Physician, who healeth all our infirmities; that we may once say, "It is good for me that I was afflicted."

It was about a day's journey from Capernaum to Cana; from thence, hither, did this courtier come for the cure of his son's fever. What pains even the greatest can be content to take for bodily health! No way is long, no labour tedious to the desirous. Our souls are sick, alas! of a spiritual fever, labouring under the cold fit of infidelity, and the hot fit of self-love; and we sit still at home, and see them languish unto death.

This ruler was neither faithless nor faithful: had he been quite faithless, he had not taken such pains to come to Christ; had he been faithful, he had not made this suit to Christ, when he was come, "Come down, and heal my son, ere he die."

"Come down;" as if Christ could not have cured him absent. "Ere he die;" as if that Power could not have raised him, being dead. How much difference was here betwixt the centurion and the ruler! That came for his servant, this for his son. This son was not more above the servant, than the faith which sued for the servant surpassed that which sued for the son. The one can say, "Master, come not under my roof, for I am not worthy; only speak the word, and my servant shall be whole." The other can say, "Master, either come under my roof, or my son cannot be whole." "Heal my son," had been a good suit, for Christ is the only physician for all diseases; but, "Come down and heal him," was to teach God how to work.

He who came to complain of his son's sickness, hears of his own. "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." This nobleman was (it is probable) of Capernaum; there Christ had often preached; there was one of his chief residences. Either this man had heard our Saviour oft, or might have so done; yet, because Christ's miracles came to him only by hearsay (for as yet we find none at all wrought where he preached most), therefore the man believes not enough; but so speaks to Christ as to some ordinary physician, "Come down and heal." Unbelief was the common disease of the Jews: no recipe could heal it but wonders. "A wicked and adulterous generation seeks signs." Had they not been wilfully graceless, there was already proof enough of the Messiah: the miraculous conception and life of the fore-runner, Zacharias's dumbness, the attestation of angels, the apparition of the star, the journey of the sages, the vision of the shepherds, the testimonies of Anna and Simeon, the prophecies fulfilled, the voice from heaven at his baptism, the divine words that he spake; and yet they must have all made up with miracles; which though he was not unwilling to give at his own times, yet he thought much to be tied to at theirs. Not to believe without signs, was a sign of stubborn hearts.

It was a foul fault, and a dangerous one, "Ye will not believe." What is it that shall condemn the world but unbelief? What else can condemn us? No sin can condemn the penitent: repentance is a fruit of faith; where true faith is, there can be no condemnation; as there can be nothing but condemnation without it. How much more foul in a noble Capernaite, that had heard the sermons of so divine a Teacher! The greater light we have, the more shame it is for us to stumble. Oh what shall become of us that reel and fall in the clearest sun-shine that ever beamed forth upon any church! Be merciful to our sins, O God! and say any thing of us rather than, "Ye will not believe."

The centurion's servant was sick, the ruler's son: the centurion does not sue to Christ to come; he only says, "My servant is sick of a palsy;" Christ answers him, "I will come and heal him:" the ruler sues unto Christ that he would come and heal his son; Christ will not go; but only says, "Go thy way, thy son lives;" outward things carry no respect with God: the image of that divine majesty shining inwardly in the graces of the soul, is that which wins love from him in the meanest state; the centurion's faith, therefore, could do more than the ruler's greatness; and that faithful man's servant hath more regard than this great man's son.

The ruler's request was, "Come and heal;" Christ's answer was "Go thy way, thy son lives." Our merciful Saviour meets those in the end, whom he crosses in the way: how sweetly does he correct our prayers! and while he does not give us what we ask, gives us something better than we asked.

With good reason he forbears to go down with this ruler, lest he should confirm him in an opinion of measuring his power by conceits of locality and distance; but he does that in absence, for which his presence was required, with a repulse, "Thy son liveth;" giving a greater demonstration of his omnipotence than was craved. How oft doth God not hear according to our will, that he may hear us more to our advantage! The chosen vessel would be rid of temptations, he hears of a supply of grace; the sick man asks release, he receives patience; life, and receives glory. Let us ask what we think is best, let him give what he knows is best.

With

With one word Christ heals two patients, the son and the father; the son's fever, the father's unbelief. That operative word of our Saviour was not without the intention of a trial; had not the ruler gone home satisfied with that assurance of his son's life and recovery, neither of them had been blessed with success. Now the news of performance meets him one half of the way: and he that believed somewhat before he came, and more when he went, advanced to more faith in the way; and, when he came home, his faith was enlarged to all the skirts of his family. A weak faith may be true, but a true faith is growing: he that boasts of a full stature in the first moment of his assent, may presume, but does not believe.

After this, Jesus, attended with the twelve, went through the whole country, preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and coming into a house with a design to eat, he was so crowded with the people that he could not: and therefore he disposed himself to employ his time in administering to the necessities of those who stood in need of his help, of which there were many and daily instances; and with one of which he was presented in the person of a poor dæmoniac, possessed with a blind and dumb devil.

As it is in bodily diseases, that they do not affect us alike, some seize upon the humours, others upon the spirits; some assault the brain, others the heart, or lungs; such is the case in bodily and spiritual possessions. In some, the evil spirit takes their senses, in some, their limbs; in some, their inward faculties: they likewise spiritually affect to move us to several sins; one to lust, another to covetousness or ambition, another to cruelty; and their names have distinguished them according to these various effects. This was a dumb devil, which had possessed not only the tongue of this man, but his ear; and not that only, but (as it seems) his eyes too.

O subtle and tyrannical spirit, that obstructs all ways to the soul: that keeps out all means of grace both from the door and windows of the heart; yea, that stops up all passages, whether of ingress or egress; of ingress at the eye or ear, of egress at the mouth, that there might be no capacity of redress,

That cunning man-slayer knows there is no way to purge the sick soul, but upward, by casting out the vicious humour wherewith it is clogged; and therefore holds the lips close, that the heart may not disburden itself by so wholesome an evacuation: "When I kept silence, my bones consumed; for day and night thy hand, O Lord, was heavy upon me, my moisture is turned into the drought of summer: O let me confess against myself my wickedness unto thee, that thou mayest forgive the punishment of my sin."

We have a tongue for God, when we praise him; for ourselves, when we pray and confess; for our brethren, when we speak the truth for their information; which if we hold back in unrighteousness, we give place to that dumb devil. Where do we not see that accursed spirit? he is on the bench, when the mute or partial judge speaks not forth truth and innocence; he is in the pulpit, when the prophets of God smother, mince, or adulterate, the message of their Master: he is at the bar, when irreligious jurors dare lend an oath to fear, to hope, to gain; he is in the market, when dishonest dealers for their penny sell the truth, and their soul.

But, what strange variety do I see in the spectators of this miracle! some wondering, others censuring, a third sort tempting, a fourth applauding. There was never a man or action, but what was subject to variety of constructions. What man could be so holy, as he that was God? What act could be more worthy, than the dispossession of an evil spirit? yet this man, this act passes through different interpretations. What can we do to undergo but one opinion? If we give alms, and fast, some will magnify our charity, and devotion; others will tax our hypocrisy: if we give not, some will condemn our hard-heartedness; others will allow our regard to justice. The austere forerunner of Christ came neither eating nor drinking, they say, "He hath a devil;" the Son of man came eating and drinking, they say, "This man is a glutton, a friend of publicans and sinners:" and here one of his holy acts carries away at once wonder, censure, doubt, and celebration. There is no way safe for a man but to square his actions by the right rule of justice, of charity, as laid down in the word of God; and then give the world leave to pass their judgment at pleasure.

It is not at all strange that the people marvelled; for here were four wonders in one; the blind saw, the deaf heard, the dumb spake, the dæmoniac is delivered; wonder was due to so extraordinary and powerful a work; and, if not this, nothing. We can express our admiration at the poor devices or activities of men, how much more at the excellent works of Omnipotence! One who knows the frame of heaven and earth, may not be much affected with the imperfect acts of frail humanity; but will with great ravishment of soul acknowledge the miraculous works of the same almighty hand.

But whom do I see wondering? The multitude; the unlearned beholders follow that act with wonder, which the learned scribes entertain with indignity: "God hath revealed those things to babes, which he hath hid from the wise and prudent." With what scorn did those great rabbies speak of the sons of the earth, "This people, that know not the law, is accursed."

The multitude wondered; who censured but scribes, great doctors of the law, of the divinity of the Jews? What scribes, but those of Jerusalem, the most eminent academy of Judæa? These were the men who, out of their deep reputed judgment, cast these foul aspersions upon Christ. Great wits oftentimes mislead both the owners and followers. How many will wish one day they had been born dunces, yea ideots, when they shall find their wit to have shut them out of heaven! "Where is the scribe, where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made the wisdom of the world foolishness?" Say the world what it will, a dram of holiness is worth a pound of wit; let others censure with the scribes, let me wonder with the multitude.

What could malice say worse, "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the prince of devils?" The Jews well knew that the gods of the heathen were no other than devils; amongst whom, because the lord of flies (so called; whether perhaps for the concourse of flies to the abundance of his sacrifices, or for his aid implored against the annoyance of those swarms) was held the chief, therefore they style him, "The prince of devils."

Was it possible that the wit of envy could devise so high a slander! Beelzebub was a god of the heathen; therefore herein they accuse him for an idolater: Beelzebub was a devil to the Jews, therefore they accuse him for a conjurer; Beelzebub was the chief of devils, therefore they accuse him for an arch exorcist, for the worst kind of magician. Some professors of this black art, though their work be devilish, yet pretend to do it in the name of Jesus, and will presumptuously seem to do that by command, which is secretly transacted by agreement: but the scribes accuse Christ of a direct compact with the devil, and suppose both a league and familiarity, which by the law of Moses (in the very hand of a Saul) was no other than a capital offence; yea, so deep doth this wound reach, that our Saviour searching it to the bottom, finds no less in it than the sin against the Holy Ghost; inferring hereupon that dreadful sentence of the unpardonable quality of that sin unto death! And if this horrible crimination were cast upon thee, O Saviour, in whom the prince of this world found nothing, what wonder is it if we thy sinful servants are branded on all sides with evil tongues.

Yea (which is yet more) how plain is it that these men forced their tongue to speak against their own heart! Else, this blasphemy had been only against the Son of man, not against the Holy Ghost: but now that the Searcher of hearts finds it to be no less than against the blessed Spirit of God, the spite must needs be obstinate; their malice wilfully crosses their conscience. Envy never regards how true, but how mischievous: so it may gall, or kill, it cares little whether with truth, or falsehood: for us, "Blessed are we when men revile us, and say all manner of evil of us, for the name of Christ;" for them: "What reward shall be given to thee, thou false tongue? Even sharp arrows, with hot burning coals;" yea those very coals of hell, from which thou wert kindled.

The people, beholding the man who was both dumb and blind, now see and speak, ran in such prodigious companies after him, and so scandalized the Pharisees, who thought that by the means of this prophet their reputation would be lessened, and their schools empty, that first a rumour was scattered up and down, from an uncertain ground, but communicated with tumult and apparent noises, that Jesus was beside himself. Upon which rumour his friends and kindred came together to see, and to make some provisions

accordingly.

accordingly. When the mother of Jesus and his kindred came, they found him in an house, incircled with a croud of people, full of wonder and admiration. And there it was that the holy Virgin-Mother might hear part of her own prophecy literally verified, that "the generations of the earth should call her blessed:" for a woman, worshipping Jesus, cried, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck." To this Jesus replied (not denying her to be highly blessed, who had received the honour of being the mother of the Messiah; but advancing the dignities of spiritual excellencies far above the greatest temporal honour in the world), "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."

Our blessed Saviour being still in the house, they told him that his mother and his brethren staid without for him; upon which he told them, those relations were less than the ties of duty and religion; for the dear names of mother and brother, which are sanctified by the laws of God and nature, are made far more sacred when a spiritual kindred supervenes. And therefore Christ, to signify this office of his to declare the will of his Father to be dearer to him than all relations; and withal to shew, that obedience to God was above all things most welcome to him; he tells them, that natural and secular respects sway not with him in comparison of the gaining proselytes to heaven. And turning to his disciples, said, "Behold my mother and my brethren;" subjoining for a reason, "Whosoever does the will of my Father which is in heaven, becomes thereby the child of God, and consequently by that means the brother and sister of Christ; on whom he setteth a greater value, than paying a civility to those who are in carnal respects nearer to him."

Having, in a former part (p. 51—54.) inserted a few particulars, concerning John the Baptist, his testimony concerning Christ, &c. we shall now, to preserve the order of chronology, introduce a further and more circumstantial account of him, from the time of his imprisonment, till Herod put him to death; with some useful reflections and observations relating to this extraordinary person.

It was now about a year since Herod had committed St. John the Baptist close prisoner to the castle of Machæras, lying all the while exposed to the fury and resentment of a malicious woman, who could not forgive the rebuke the Baptist gave to Herod, in telling him it was unlawful for him to have his brother's wife. In vain had Herodias racked her brain for an opportunity to destroy him for it, for Herod had not yet filled up the measure of his iniquity. But, after a year's waiting, a favourable occasion offered itself to complete her revenge. Herod's birth-day being solemnized with much mirth and gaiety; among other joyful entertainments nothing contributed so much to Herod's pleasure and satisfaction as the active performance of Herodias's daughter in a dance*: insomuch that Herod rashly promises her whatever she would ask, confirming his promise with an oath. The damsel, not being wicked enough of herself, consults her impious mother, who as readily as maliciously instructs her daughter to demand the head of John the Baptist.

Three of the Evangelists have (as with one pen) recorded the death of the great har-binger of Christ, as most remarkable and useful: he was the fore-runner of Christ, as into the world, so out of it: yea, he that made way for Christ into the world, made way for the name of Christ into the court of Herod: this Herod Antipas was the son to that Herod, who was, and is, ever infamous for the massacre at Bethlehem. Cruelty here runs in the blood. The murderer of John the fore-runner of Christ, is well descended of him who would have murdered Christ, and, for his sake, murdered the infants. It was late before this Herod heard the fame of Jesus; not till he had taken off the head of John the Baptist. The father of this Herod inquired for Christ too soon; this, too late. Great men should

* This girl, who danced off the Baptist's head, passing over a frozen lake, the ice breaking, she fell in up to the neck, and her head was parted from her body by the violence of the fragments of ice shaken by the water, and its own fall. Nor was it long before God's judgment reached the incestuous couple: for Aretas, a king in Arabia Petrea (whose daughter Herod had divorced, or put away for Herodias), making war with Herod, for the affront to his daughter, defeated him: soon after which, the adulterous pair were banished to Lyons, in France, by decree of the Roman senate, where they lived ingloriously, and died miserably.

have the best intelligence: if they improve it to all other uses of either private or civil affairs, to the neglect of spiritual, their judgment shall be so much more, as their helps and means were greater: whether this Herod was taken up with his Arabian wars against Aretas, his father-in-law, or whether he was employed in his journey to Rome, I inquire not: but if he were at home, I must wonder how he could be so long without hearing of Christ. Certainly, it was a sign he had a very irreligious court, that none of his followers did so much as report to him the miracles of our Saviour; who, doubtless, told him many a vain tale in the mean time: one tells him of his brother Philip's discontent; another relates the news of the Roman court; another, the angry threats of Aretas; another flatters him with the admiration of his new mistress, and disparagement of the old: no man so much as says, 'Sir, there is a prophet in your kingdom, that doth wonders:' there was not a man in his country that had not been astonished with the fame of Jesus; yea, all Syria, and the adjoining regions, rang of it; only Herod's court hears nothing. Miserable is that greatness which keeps men from the notice of Christ. How plain is it, from hence, that our Saviour kept at a distance from the court! The austere and hermetical harbinger of Christ, it seems, preached there often, and was heard gladly; though at last to his cost; while our Saviour, who was more sociable, came not thither. He sent a message to that fox, whose den he would not approach: whether it were that he purposely forbore, lest he should give that tyrant occasion to revive and pursue his father's suspicion, or whether he would not so much honour a place so infamously graceless and disordered; or whether, by his example to teach us the contempt of outward pomp and glory, surely Herod saw him not till his death, heard not of him till the death of John the Baptist. And now his want of intelligence was not more strange than his misconstruction; "This is John the Baptist, whom I have beheaded." First he doubted, then he resolved: he doubted, upon the suggestions of others; upon his own apprehensions, he resolved thus: and though he thought good to set a face on it to strangers, to whom it was not safe to betray his fear; yet to his domestics he freely discovered his thoughts, "This is John Baptist." The troubled conscience will frequently open that to familiar friends which it hides from the eyes of others. Shame and fear meet together in guiltiness. How could he imagine this to be John? That common conceit of transmigration could have no place here; there could be no transmigration of souls into a full-grown and well-formed body; that received fancy of the Jews held only in the case of conception and birth; not of full age: but why need we canvas this point, when Herod himself professes, "He is risen from the dead?" He that was a Jew by profession, and knew the story of Elisha's bones, of the Sareptan's and Shunamite's son; and, in all likelihood, had now heard of our Saviour's miraculous raising of others from death, might think this power reflected upon himself: even Herod, bad as he was, believed a resurrection. Lewdness of life and practice may consist with orthodoxy in some main points of religion: who can doubt of this, when the devils believe and tremble? Alas! where shall those men appear whose faces are Christian, but their hearts Sadducees?

A wicked man needs no other tormentor (especially for the sins of blood) than his own heart. Revel, O Herod, and feast, and frolick; and please thyself with dances, and triumphs, and pastimes; thy sin shall be as some fury that will invisibly follow thee, and scourge thy guilty heart with secret lashes, and upon all occasions shall begin thine hell within thee: he wanted not other sins that once cried, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God."

Even the very first act of Herod's cruelty was heinous; he was foul enough with other sins, yet "he added this above all, that he shut up John in prison." The violence offered to God's messengers is branded as notorious: the sanctity and austere carriage of the man justly won him honour from the multitude, and aggravated the sin; but whatever his person had been, his mission was sacred ("He shall send his messenger"); the wrong redounds to the God that sent him: it is the charge of God, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm:" the precept is perhaps one, for even prophets

prophets were anointed; but at least, next to violation of majesty, is the wrong to a prophet.

But what? Do I not hear the Evangelist say, "that Herod heard John gladly?" How is it then? Did John take the ear and heart of Herod, and doth Herod bind the hands and feet of John? Doth he wilfully imprison him whom he gladly heard? How inconstant is a carnal heart to good resolutions! How little trust is to be given to the good notions of unregenerate persons! We have known when even mad dogs have lawned upon their master; yet he hath been too wise to trust them but in chains.

What then might be the cause of John's bonds, and Herod's displeasure? "For Herodias's sake; his brother Philip's wife." That woman was the subject of Herod's lust, and the exciter of his revenge: this wanton woman ran away with her husband's brother; and now doting upon her incestuous lover, and finding John to be a rub in the way of her licentious adultery, is impatient of his liberty, and will not rest till she procures his restraint. Determined sinners are mad upon their lewd courses, and run furiously upon their gainfayers: a bear, robbed of her whelps, is less impetuous; indeed, they who have determined to love their sins more than their souls, whom can they care for? Though Herod was wicked enough, yet had it not been upon Herodias's instigation, he had probably never imprisoned John.

Herodias herself had first plotted to kill the Baptist; her murderers were suborned, her ambushes laid: the success failed, and now she works with Herod. Oh marvellous hand of the Almighty! John was a mean man for state, being solitary, defenceless, unarmed, impotent; Herodias a queen so great, that she swayed Herod himself; and not more great than subtle; and not more great or subtle than malicious: yet Herodias endeavoured to kill John, and could not. What an invisible and yet sure guard there is about the poor servants of God, who seem helpless and despicable in themselves! There is over them an hand of divine protection, which can be no more opposed than seen.

The fact of Herod was horrible and prodigious: to rob his own brother of the partner of his bed; to tear away part of his flesh; yea, his body from his head: so that there was at once, in one act, adultery, incest, violence. Adultery, that he took another's wife; incest, that he took his brother's; violence, that he thus took her in spite of her husband; justly, therefore, might John say, "It is not lawful for thee:" he passed by one of Herod's sins, but reprov'd him of all the evils that he had done, though more eminently of this; as that which more attracted the eye of the world. It was not the crown or lawful sceptre of Herod that could daunt the homely but faithful messenger of God: as one that came in the spirit of Elias, he fears no faces, spares no wickedness. There must meet, in God's ministers, courage and impartiality: impartiality, not to make difference of persons; courage, not to spare the sins of the greatest. It is a hard condition that the necessity of our calling casts upon us, in some cases, to run upon the pikes of displeasure. Prophecies were no burdens, if they did not expose us to these dangers: we must connive at no evil; every sin unreproved becomes ours.

Were it not for fear of the people, John would have been murdered: what a self-conflicting monster is a wicked man, when left to his own thoughts! while, on the one side, he is urged by his conscience; on the other, by his lustful desires, and by the importunity of Satan. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked:" and after all his inward struggles, he falls upon the worst expedient, so that his yielding is worse than his fight. When God sees fit, Herod's tyranny shall effect that which the wise providence of the Almighty hath decreed for his servant's glory: in the mean while, rubs shall be cast in his way; and this for one, "He feared the people." What an absurd and sottish thing is hypocrisy! Herod fears the people, he fears not God. Tell me now, Herod, what could the people do, at the worst? Perhaps, mutiny against thee, raise in arms and tumults, disturb the government, it may be, shake it off. What could God do? yea, what not? stir up all his creatures to plague thee, and, when he hath done this, tumble thee down to hell, and there torment thee everlastingly. Oh, fond Herod! that fearest where no fear was; and fearest not, where nothing but terror awaits thee!

No

No man is so great as to be utterly exempted from fear. The Jews feared Herod, Herod feared the Jews: the healthful fear sickness, the free servitude; the people fear a tyrant's oppression and cruelty; the tyrant fears the people's mutiny and insurrection: if there have been some so great as to be above the reach of the power and machinations of inferiors, yet never any that have been free from their fears and suspicions. Happy is he that fears nothing but what he should—God.

Why did Herod fear the people? "They held John for a prophet." This opinion was both common and constant: even the scribes and pharisees durst not say, his baptism was from men; it is the wisdom and goodness of God, ever to give his children favour, somewhere; if Jezebel hate Elias, Ahab shall for the time honour him; and if Herod hate the Baptist, and would kill him, yet the people reverence him: Herod's malice would destroy him, the people's sense of his reputation keeps him alive. As wise princes have been content to maintain a faction in their court or state, for their own purposes, so here did the God of heaven contrive and order differences of judgment and affection betwixt Herod and his subjects, for his own holy ends: else, certainly, if all wicked men should conspire in evil, there could be no living upon earth; as, on the contrary, if evil spirits did not agree, hell could not stand.

Herod's birth-day is kept; and so was Pharaoh's; both of them with blood: these personal stains cannot make the practice unlawful; where the man is good, the birth is memorable.

Herod's birth-day was kept with a feast, and this feast was a supper; it was fit to be a night-work. This festivity was spent in works of darkness, not of the light; it was a child of darkness that was then born, not of the day.

"They that are drunken, are drunken in the night:" there is a kind of shame in sin, even where it is committed with the stiffest resolution, at least there was wont so to be; if now sin be grown impudent, and justice bashful, woe be to us!

That there might be perfect revels at Herod's birth-day, besides the feast, there is music and dancing, and that by Salome, the daughter of Herodias. A meet daughter for such a mother! bred according to the disposition of so immodest a parent.

Herodias and Salome have what they desired: the dance pleased Herod well. Those indecent motions that would have displeased any modest eye (though what should a modest eye do at Herod's feast), greatly pleased Herod. Well did Herodias know how to please the tooth of her paramour: she had therefore purposely so composed the carriage and gesture of her daughter, as it might take best: though doubtless the same action could not have so pleased from another. Herod saw in Salome's face and fashion the image of her whom he doted on; so did she look, so did she move: besides, his lavish cups had predisposed him to wantonness; and now he cannot but like that well which so pleasingly suited his inordinate desire.

What a strange fit of transport was this! "Whatsoever thou shalt ask:" half a kingdom for a dance! Herod, this pastime is overpaid for; there is no proportion in this reward: this is not bounty, it is prodigality: neither does this pass under a bare promise only, but under an oath.

Oh the wonderful strength of malice, Salome was offered no less than half the kingdom of Herod, yet chuses to ask the head of a poor preacher! Nothing is so sweet to a corrupt heart, as revenge: especially when it may bring with it a full scope to a dear sin. All worldlings are of this stamp: they had rather sin freely for a while, and die; than refrain, and live happily eternally.

What a suit was this! "Give me here in a charger the head of John the Baptist:" it is not enough for her to say, 'Let John's head be cut off:' but "Give it me in a charger." What a service was here to be brought in to a feast; especially to a woman! a dead man's head swimming in blood! How cruel is a wicked heart, that can take pleasure in those things which are attended with most horror!

Oh the importunity of a galled conscience! Herodias could never think herself safe till John was dead; she could never think him dead till his head was off; she could not think his head was off, till she had it brought her in a platter: a guilty heart never thinks it hath

hath made sure enough: yea, even after the head was thus brought, they thought him alive again; guilt and security can never lodge together in one bosom.

Herod was sorry, and no doubt in earnest; in the midst of his cups and feasting: I should rather think his jollity counterfeited, than his grief. It is true, Herod was a fox; but that subtle beast dissembles not always; when he runs away from the dogs, he means as he does. Herod was formerly willing to have killed John; yet he was unwillingly willing; and so far as he was unwilling to kill him as a prophet, as a just man, so far was he sorry that he must be killed. Had Herod been wise, he had not been perplexed; had he been so wise as to have engaged himself lawfully, and within due limits, he had not now been so intangled as to have needed sorrow. The folly of sinners is the source of their pain, and draws upon them a late and unprofitable repentance.

Herod had so much religion as to make scruple of an oath; but not so much as to make scruple of a murder. No man casts off all justice and piety at once; but while he gives himself over to some sins, he sticks at others. No thanks to lewd men that they are not universally vicious.

Next to his oath, is the respect to his honour. His guests heard his deep engagement, and now he cannot fall off with reputation: it would argue levity and rashness to say, and not to do, and "What would the world say?" The mis-conceits of the points of honour have cost millions of souls. As many a one does good only to be seen of men, so many a one does evil only to satisfy the humour and opinion of others. It is a damnable plausibility so to regard the vain approbation or censure of the beholders, as in the mean time to neglect the allowance or judgment of God and conscience. But what ill guests were these! how truly worthy of an Herod's table! Had they had but common civility, finding Herod perplexed, they had acquitted him by their dissuasions; and would have disclaimed the expectation of so bloody a performance: but they rather (to gratify Herodias) make way for so slight and easy a compliance. Even godly princes have complained of the iniquity of their heels; how much more must they needs be ill attended who give encouragement and examples of lewdness!

Herod was sorry, but he sends the executioner for John's head. One act hath made Herod a tyrant, and John a martyr: Herod a tyrant, in that, without any legal proceedings, without so much as false witnesses, he takes off the head of a man, of a prophet. It was lust that carried Herod into murder. The progress of sin is more hardly avoided than the entrance; whoever gives himself leave to be wicked, knows not where he shall stop.

John was a martyr, in dying for bearing witness to the truth; truth in life, in judgment, in doctrine. It was the holy purpose of God, that he who had baptized with water, should now be baptized with blood. Never did God mean that his best children should dwell always upon earth: should they stay here, wherefore hath he provided glory above? Now God intended to deliver John from a double prison; of his own, of Herod's; and to have him placed in the glorious liberty of his sons: his head must be taken off, that it may be crowned with glory. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Oh happy birth-day (not of Herod, but) of the Baptist! now doth John enter into his joy; and the day of his martyrdom is ever celebrated by the church. This blessed forerunner of Christ said of himself, "I must decrease." He is decreased indeed, and now grown shorter by the head; but he is not so much decreased in stature as increased in glory: for one minute's pain, he is possessed of endless joy; and, as he came before his Saviour into the world, so is he gone before him into heaven.

The head is brought in a charger. What a dish was here for a feast! How prodigiously insatiable is the cruelty of a wicked heart! O blessed service, fit for the table of heaven! It is not for thee, O wicked Herod; nor for thee, malicious and wanton Herodias; it is a dish precious and pleasing to the God of heaven; to the blessed angels, who looked upon that head with more delight for his constant fidelity, than the beholders saw it with horror, and Herodias with delight, through revenge.

It is brought to Salome, as the reward of her dance; she presents it to her mother, as the dainty she had longed for. Methinks I see how that chaste and holy countenance was tossed about by impure and filthy hands; that true and faithful tongue, those sacred lips, those pure eyes, those mortified cheeks, are now insultingly handled by an incestuous harlot, and made a scorn to the drunken eyes of Herod's guests.

Oh the wondrous judgments and incomprehensible dispositions of the holy, wise, almighty God! He that was sanctified in the womb, born and conceived with so much note and miracle ("What manner of child shall this be?") lived with so much reverence and observation, is now, at midnight, obscurely murdered in a close prison, and his head brought forth and exposed to the insults and derision of harlots and ruffians. O God, thou knowest what thou hast to do with thine own! thus thou sufferest thine to be misused and slaughtered here below, that thou mayest crown them above. It should not be thus, if thou didst not mean that their glory should be answerable to their humiliation, and more than amply repay them for all their sufferings.

When Jesus heard of the barbarous treatment of John, that the same might not befall him before he had fulfilled the office for which he was sent, he departed by ship from thence, taking none but his disciples with him, and went to a place not inhabited. But he could not be long concealed any where; for the people, hearing where he was, though in an inhospitable desert, flocked to him as fast as they could, taking a great circuit by land before they could come at him. The holy Jesus seeing their faith and zeal, though he came to this desert to avoid being thronged, would not conceal himself any longer from them; but, being moved with compassion, he came to them, and healed their sick. But considering afterwards that they were not within reach of any entertainment, there being no house or village near, lest the multitude should faint in their return to their houses, he resolves, by a miraculous supply, to make provision for them: and demanding what store of food they had, the disciples told him only five loaves and two fishes. Upon which he commanded the company to sit down on the grass: he took the loaves and fishes, and, looking up to heaven, blessed and brake them, giving them to the disciples to divide among the multitude. Here was a miracle beyond the expectation or desire of the people: they had their end in attending him, by having their sick healed; but when they saw that with five loaves of barley and two small fishes he satisfied five thousand men, besides women and children, and that the fragments which remained filled twelve baskets, the miracle so happily met their affections, that they no longer doubted of his being the Messiah who was to come into the world.

The apostles, having preached up and down, return to their Master, and give him an account of their labours and endeavours in his service. Jesus having heard of the death of John, he takes his apostles aside into a desert place, namely, the desert of Bethsaida, passing with them over the sea of Galilee, that is, some creek or bay of it (not over to the other side beyond Jordan, but he coasted by sea from one place to another on the same shore; namely, from Capernaum to the desert of Bethsaida; for it is said the people followed him on foot, and came up to him). Being come thither, he went up into a mountain, and there sat with his disciples, entertaining them with his heavenly discourses. The people, seeing them depart, ran before on foot, out of all the towns thereabout, to the place whither he went, and coming thither, assembled unto him. Christ seeing the multitude, was moved with compassion towards them, looking upon them "as sheep without a shepherd," that is, destitute of faithful skilful pastors; therefore he himself taught them many things here, and preached (as it seemeth) a large sermon to them. And when the day was far spent, his apostles came to him, and intreated him to send away the people (being now hungry), that they might provide themselves victuals in the villages and country round about. But instead thereof, he commands the multitude should sit down on the grass, and then he works that great miracle of feeding above five thousand men, besides women and children, with five barley loaves and two little fishes: and there remained twelve baskets full of fragments.

Useful REFLECTIONS and REMARKS.

The place where this miracle was wrought was desert; the time, evening; doubtless our Saviour made choice of both these, that there might be not only more use, but more celebrity of his miracle. Had it been in the morning, they had not been hungry; their feeding had been unnecessary: had it been in the village, provision either might have been made, or, at least, would have been supposed to be made by themselves; but as it was both in the desert and evening, there was good ground for the disciples to move, and for Christ to work this miracle for their support. Then only may we expect and crave help from God, when we find our need: superfluous aid can neither be heartily desired, nor earnestly looked for, nor thankfully received from the hands of mercy; "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." If it be not a burden, there can be no casting it upon God. Hence it is that divine aid comes ever in the very instant and exigence of our trials; when we have been exercised, and almost tired with long hopes, yea with despair of success, that it may be both more longed for before it comes, and, when it comes, be the more welcome.

Oh the faith and zeal of those clients of Christ! they not only follow him from the city into the desert, from delicacy to want, from society to solitude; but forget their bodies, in pursuit of the food of their souls. Nothing is more hard for an healthful man to forget than his belly; within a few hours this will be sure to solicit him, and will take no denials; yet such sweetness did these hearers find in the spiritual repast, that they thought not on the bodily cravings; and the disciples pitied them, though they had no mercy on themselves. By how much more a man's mind is taken up with heavenly things, so much less will he care for earthly. What will earth be to us, when we are all spirit? and in the mean time, according to the degrees of our intellectual elevations, will be our neglect of bodily gratifications.

The disciples think they counsel well: "Send them away, that they may buy victuals." Here was a strong charity, but a weak faith: a strong charity, in that they would have the people relieved; a weak faith, in that they supposed they could not otherwise be so well relieved. As a man who, when he sees many ways lie before him, takes that which he thinks fairest and nearest, so do they: this way of relief lay openest to their view, and promised most. They might well have thought, 'It is as easy for our Master to feed them as to heal them; there is an equal facility in all things to a supernatural power:' yet they say, "Send them away." In all our projects and suits, we are still ready to move for that which is most obvious, most likely, when sometimes that way is less agreeable to the will of God.

The all-wise and almighty Arbiter of all things hath a thousand secret means to honour himself in his proceedings with us: it is not for us to carve hastily for ourselves; but we must humbly depend on the disposal of his wisdom and mercy.

Our Saviour's answer gives a strange check to their motion; "They need not depart." Not need? They had no victuals. They must have some; there was none to be had. What greater need could there be? He knew the supply which he intended; though they knew it not. His command was therefore more strange than his assertion, "Give ye them to eat." Nothing gives what it hath not. Had they had victuals, they had not called for a dismissal; and not having, how should they give? It was thy wisdom, O Saviour, thus to prepare thy disciples for the intended miracle: thou wouldst not do it abruptly, without an intimation both of the purpose of it and the necessity. And how modestly dost thou undertake it! Without noise, without ostentation. I hear thee not say, 'I will give them to eat,' but, "Give ye:" as if it should be their act, not thine. Thus sometimes it pleaseth thee to require of us what we are not able to perform; either that thou mayest shew us what we cannot do, and so humble us; or that thou mayest excite us to a dependence upon thee, who canst do it for us: as when the mother bids the infant come to her, which hath not yet the ready use of his legs, it is that he may cling the faster to her hand, or garment, for support.

Thou

Thou bidst us, impotent wretches, to keep thy royal laws. Alas! what can we sinners do? there is not one letter of those thy ten words that we are able to keep: this charge of thine intends to shew us not our strength, but our weakness: thus thou wouldst turn our eyes as well back to what we might have done, as to what we could have done; and upwards to thee, in whom we have done it; in whom we can do it. He wrongs thy goodness and justice, that misconstrues these thy commands, as if they were of the same nature with those of the Egyptian task-masters; requiring the brick, and not giving the straw: but, in bidding us do what we cannot, thou enablest us to do what thou biddest; thy precepts under the gospel have not only an intimation of our duty, but a manifestation of thy power; as here, when thou badest the disciples to give to the multitude, thou didst mean to supply them with what thou commandedst to give.

Our Saviour hath what he looked for, an acknowledgment of their insufficiency; "We have here but five loaves and two fishes." A poor provision for the family of the Lord of the whole earth! Five loaves, and those barley; two fishes, and those little ones. We well know, O Saviour, that the beasts were thine on a thousand mountains; all the corn is thine that covers the whole surface of the earth; all the fowls of the air are thine; thou didst provide those flocks of quails that fell among the tents of thy rebellious Israelites: thou didst rain down those showers of manna round about their camp, and dost thou take up (for thyself and thy attendants) with "five barley loaves and two little fishes?" Certainly, this was thy will, not thy need. To teach us, that this body must be fed, not pampered; our belly must not be our master, much less our God; or if it be, the next word is, "whose glory is their shame, whose end damnation:" it is noted as the crime of the rich glutton, that he fared deliciously every day. I never find that Christ entertained any guests but twice; and that was only with loaves and fishes: I find him sometimes feasted by others, more liberally. But his domestic fare how simple, how homely it is! The end of food is to sustain nature; meat was ordained for the belly, the belly for the body, the body for the soul, the soul for God: we must still look through the subordinate ends to the highest: to rest in the mere pleasure of meat, is for those creatures which have no souls. Oh the extreme luxury of these times! What a diligent search is there for all sorts of curious dishes from the furthest seas and lands, to make up one hour's meal! what a variety in cookery! what devised mixtures! what nice sauces! what feasting, not of the taste only, but of the smell! Are we the disciples of him that took up with the loaves and fishes, or the scholars of a Philoxenus, an Apicius, or Vitellius, or those other monsters of the palate? Are we not the true sons of those first parents that killed themselves with their teeth?

Neither was the quality of these victuals more coarse than the quantity small: they make a "But" of five loaves and two fishes; and well might, in respect of so many thousand mouths. A little food to an hungry stomach rather whets the appetite, than satisfies it; as a little rain upon a thirsty soil rather helps to scorch than refresh it. When we look with the eye of sense or reason upon any object, we shall see an impossibility of those effects which faith can easily apprehend, and divine power more easily produce. Carnal minds are ready to measure all our hopes by human possibilities, and, when they fail, to despair of success: whereas true faith measures them by divine power, and therefore can never be disheartened: this grace is for things not seen, both beyond hope and against it.

The virtue is not in the means, but in the agent: "Bring them hither to me:" how much more easy had it been for our Saviour to fetch the loaves to him than to multiply them! The hands of the disciples shall bring them, that they might more fully witness both the Author and manner of the sudden miracle. Had the loaves and fishes been multiplied without this bringing, perhaps the increase might have seemed to have come by the secret provision of the guests; but now there can be no question either of the act, or of the agent. As God takes pleasure in doing wonders for men, so he loves to be acknowledged in the great works that he performs: he hath no reason to part with his

his own glory; that is too precious for him to lose, or for his creature to embezzle. And how justly didst thou, O Saviour, in this, mean to teach thy disciples, that it was thou only who feedest the world; and upon whom both themselves and all their fellow-creatures must depend for their nourishment and provision; and that if it came not through thy hands, it could not come to theirs.

There need no more words; for I do not hear the disciples stand upon the terms of their own necessity: nor do they say, 'Alas! Sir, it is too little for ourselves; whence shall we then relieve our own hunger? permit our charity to begin at home.' No: but they willingly yield to the command of their Master, and put themselves upon his providence, for the sequel. When we have a charge from God, it is not for us to stand upon self-respects; in this case, there is no such sure liberty as in a self-contempt. Oh God! when thou callest to us for our five loaves, we must forget our own interest; otherwise, if we be more thrifty than obedient, our good turns will become evil; and much better had it been for us to have wanted that which we withhold from the owner.

He that is the Master of the feast marshals the guests; "He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass." They obey, and expect. Oh marvellous faith! So many thousands sit down and prepare themselves for a meal, when they saw nothing but five poor barley loaves and two small fishes! None of them say, 'Sit down? to what? Here are the mouths, but where is the meat? We can soon be seated, but whence shall we be served? before we draw our knives, let us see our cheer.' We have no such language as this; but they meekly and obediently dispose themselves to their places, and look up to Christ for a miraculous supply. All who would be Christ's followers, must lead the life of faith; and, even where means appear not, to wait upon that merciful hand. Nothing is more easy than to trust God when our barns and coffers are full; and to say, "Give us our daily bread," when we have it in our cupboard: but when we have nothing, when we know not how, or whence to get any thing, then to depend upon an invisible bounty, this is a true and noble act of faith. To cast away our own, that we may immediately live upon divine providence, I know no warrant for; but, when the necessity is of God's making, we see our refuge, and happy are we, if our confidence can flee to it, and rest in it. Yea, fullness would be a curse, should it debar us from this dependence; at our best we must look up to this great Householder of the world; and cannot but need his provision. If we have meat, perhaps we have not appetite; if appetite, it may be, not digestion; or if that, not health, and freedom from pain; or if that (perhaps from other incidents), not life.

The guests are set, full of expectation; he that could have multiplied the bread in absence, in silence takes it and blesses it, that he might at once shew them the Author and the means of this increase. It is thy blessing, O God, that maketh rich. What a difference do we see in men's conditions! Some languish under great means, and enjoy neither their substance nor themselves; others are chearful and happy in a little: second causes may not be denied their operation; but the over-ruling power is above; the subordinateness of the creature doth not take away from the right, from the thanks of the First Mover!

Christ could as well have multiplied the loaves whole; why would he rather do it in the breaking? Was it to teach us that, in the distribution of our goods, we should expect his blessing, not in their intire state and preservation? "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth," saith Solomon: yea, there is no man but increaseth by scattering; it is the grain thrown into the several furrows of the earth, which yields the rich interest to the husbandman; that which is tied up in his sack, or heaped in his granary, decreases by keeping. "He that soweth liberally, shall reap liberally."

Away with our weak distrust. If wealth came by us, giving were the way to want: but inasmuch as God gives to the giver, nothing can so surely enrich us as our beneficence. He multiplied the bread not to keep, but to give: "He gave it to the disciples:" and why not rather by his own hand, to the multitude, that so the miracle and thanks might have been more immediate? Wherefore was this, O Saviour, but that thou mightest procure respect to thy disciples, from the people; as great princes, when they

would introduce a favourite into the esteem of the public, pass no suits but through his hands; what an honour was this to thy servants, that as thou wert Mediator betwixt thy Father and man, so thou wouldst have them, on some beneficial occasion, mediate betwixt men and thee. How fit a type is this of thy spiritual provision, that thou who couldst have fed the world by thine immediate word, wouldst by the hands of thy ministers divide the bread of life to all hearers! Just so it was with the law; for the Israelites were very sensible that thou couldst deliver that dreadful message with thine own mouth, yet, to spare their weakness, thou wouldst treat with them by a Moses. Use of means derogates nothing from the efficacy of the principal agent; yea, rather adds to it. It argues strange weakness of our spiritual eyes, if we can look only to the hand. How absurd had these guests been, if they had confined the thanks to the servants, and had said, We have it from you; whence ye had it, is no part of our care: we owe this favour to you; if you owe it to your Master, acknowledge your obligations to him, as we do unto you. But, since they well knew that the disciples might have handled this bread long enough, before any such an effect could have followed, they easily find to whom they are beholden. Christian wisdom must teach us, that, whosoever be the means, we are to reserve our chief thanks for the Author of our good.

He gave the bread then to his disciples, not to eat, not to keep, but to distribute. It was not their particular benefit he regarded in this gift, but the good of many. In every feast, each waiter takes up his dish; not to carry it aside into a corner, for his own private repast; but to set it before the guests, for the honour of his master; and when they have done, his cheer begins. What shall we say to those injurious waiters, who fatten themselves with those concealed messes which are meant for others? Their table is made their snare; and those stolen morsels cannot but end in bitterness.

Accordingly the disciples set this fare before the guests; I do not see so much as Judas reserve a share to himself, either out of hunger or distrust. Had not our Saviour commanded so free a distribution, their self-love would easily have taught them where to begin. Nature says, First thyself, then thy friends: either extremity, or a particular charge, makes it needful for grace to alter the case. Far be it from us to think we have any claim to that which the owner gives us merely to bestow upon others.

I know not now whether more to wonder at the miraculous eating, or the miraculous leaving. Here were a whole host of guests, five thousand men; and in all likelihood no fewer women and children. But perhaps some of these only looked on: nay, they did all eat. Perhaps each person a crum, or a bit: nay, they did eat to satiety; all were satisfied. So many must needs make clean work of so little, that there could be nothing left; yea, there were fragments remaining. Perhaps some crumbs, or crusts, hardly to be discerned, much less gathered: nay, twelve baskets full; more remained than was first set before them: had they eaten nothing, it was a real miracle that so much should be left; had nothing remained, it was no less a miracle that so many had eaten, and so many were satisfied; but now that so many being present, and so many baskets were filled, the miracle was doubled. Oh work of boundless Omnipotence! Whether this were done by creation, or by conversion, may be asked by some, but need not; while Christ multiplies the bread, it is not for us to multiply his miracles. To make aught of nothing, is more, than to add much to something; it was therefore rather by turning of a former matter into these substances, than by making these substances of nothing. However, here is a marvellous provision made, a marvellous quantity of that provision, and a no less marvellous extent of that bounty.

They who depend upon God, and employ themselves in his work, shall not want a due sustenance in the very desert. Our scanty and confined beneficence reaches so far as to provide for our own: those of our domestics, who labour in our service, do but justly expect and challenge their diet; whereas, day-labourers are oftentimes obliged to provide for themselves; how much more, then, will that God, who is infinite in mercy and power, take order for the livelihood of those who attend him? We see the birds of the air provided for by him, and how rarely have we found any of them dead by hunger! yet what do they more than they are carried unto by natural instinct? How much more,

more, where, besides property, there is a rational and willing service, shall the Israelites be fed with manna, Elijah by the ravens, the widow by her multiplied meal and oil, and Christ's guests in the wilderness with loaves and fishes! O God, while thou dost thus prevent our wants by thy providence, let us not wrong thee by distrust!

As God's undertakings cannot but be exquisite, they whom he professes to feed must needs have enough: the measure of his bounty cannot but run over. Doth he take upon him to prepare a table for his Israel in the desert? the bread shall be the food of angels, the flesh shall be the delicacies of princes; manna and quails: doth he take upon him to make wine for the marriage feast of Cana? there shall be both plenty and choice; the vintage yields poor stuff to this. Will he feast his auditors in the wilderness? if they have not dainties, they shall have plenty: "They were all satisfied." Neither yet, O Saviour, is thy hand closed: what abundance of heavenly doctrine dost thou set before us! how are we feasted, yea pampered, with thy celestial delicacies! Not according to our meanness, but according to thy dignity and liberality, are we fed: thrifty and niggardly collations are not for princes: we are full of thy goodness; Oh, let our hearts run over with thanks!

I gladly wonder at this miracle of thine, O Saviour, yet so, as that I forget not mine own condition: whence is it that we have our continual provision? One and the same munificent hand doth all. If the Israelites were fed with manna in the desert, and with corn in Canaan; both were done by the same power and bounty; if the disciples were fed by the loaves multiplied, and we by the grain multiplied, both are the act of one Omnipotence. What is this but a perpetual miracle, O God, which thou workest for our preservation? without thee, there is no more power in the grain to multiply, than in the loaf; it is thou that givest it a body at thy pleasure, even to every seed his own body; it is thou that givest fullness of bread, and cleanness of teeth: there is no reason that thy goodness should be less magnified, because it is universal.

One or two baskets could have held the five loaves and two fishes; not less than twelve can hold the remainder. The divine munificence provides not for our necessity only, but for our abundance, yea superfluity. Envy and ignorance, while they make God the author of enough, are ready to impute the surplus to another cause; as we commonly say of wine, that the liquor is God's, the excess Satan's.

Thy table, O Saviour, convinces them, that there was more taken from it than set on: thy blessing makes a condition not only competent, but rich. I hear of barns full of plenty, and presses bursting out with new wine, as the rewards of those that honour thee with their substance. I hear of heads anointed with oil, and cups running over. O God, as thou hast a free hand to give, so let us have a free heart to return thee the praise of thy bounty.

Those fragments were left behind: I do not see the people, when they had filled their bellies, cramming their pockets, or stuffing their wallets; yet, the place was desert, and some of them doubtless were far from home. It becomes true disciples to be content with the present, not too solicitous for the future. Oh, Saviour, that didst not bid us beg bread for to-morrow, but for to-day; not that we should refuse thy bounty which thou pleasest to give, but that we should not distrust thy providence, by reason of the need we may have.

Even these fragments (though but of barley loaves and fish-bones) may not be left in the desert, for the manuring of that earth whereon they were increased; but, by our Saviour's holy and just command, are gathered up. The liberal Housekeeper of the world will not allow any thing to be wasted: the children's bread may not be given to dogs: and if the crumbs fall to their share, it is because their smallness admits not of a collection. If those who, out of obedience, or due thrift, have thought to gather up crumbs, and found them pearls, I wonder not: surely both are alike the good creatures of the same Maker; and both of them may prove equally costly to us in their wilful abuse. But Oh, what shall we say, that not crusts and crumbs, not loaves and dishes, and cups, but whole patrimonies are idly lavished away; not merely lost (this were more tolerable), but ill spent in a wicked riot upon dice, strumpets, drunkards! Oh the fearful account of these

these unthrifty stewards, which shall once be given in to our great Lord and Master, when he shall call us to a strict reckoning for all our talents. If he was condemned that increased not the sum intrusted to him, what shall become of him that lawlessly impairs it?

Who gathered up these fragments, but the twelve apostles; every one his basket full? They were the servitors that set on this banquet at the command of Christ; they waited at table, they took away.

The people were so wonderfully affected and transported with this miracle of Jesus, that they certainly concluded this was the Messiah promised and foretold by the prophets; and, dreaming possibly of an easy life under him, and that they should thus miraculously be fed constantly by him, they, in a furious zeal, were about to take him by force, and make him their king; which he perceiving, commands his disciples to get into the ship, and to sail away before him, along by Bethsaida to Capernaum, in the country of Genesareth, he himself going up in the mean time into the mountain (where he and his disciples had lately been), "alone to pray." His disciples obeying his command, and going to sea without him; by that time they had rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs (it being night), they were tossed with a violent tempest and contrary wind, and in great danger of being cast away. While they were in this sad condition, about the fourth watch of the night, Jesus comes to them, walking upon the sea, and made shew as if he would have passed by them. They were exceedingly troubled at this sight, supposing it had been a spirit, but he speaks to them, and bids them be of good cheer, acquainting them who he was. Peter is so encouraged and revived at this, that he desires permission from him that he might come to him on the water; which Christ granting, Peter walked towards him for some part of the way, till the wind being boisterous, his faith failed him, and he began to sink. Then crying to Jesus for help, he stretched forth his hand, and saved him; but rebuked him for his distrust and fear, seeing he was with him. Then going with him into the ship, presently the tempest ceased. The apostles were amazed beyond measure at these things; but had not so well considered the miracle of the loaves which he had lately wrought, as to assure themselves thereby of his divine power, and to believe him able to do such a miracle as this, namely, to walk upon the sea; for as yet they were but slow and dull in apprehending and believing spiritual things, especially what belonged to the divine power of Christ, Mark vi. 51, 52. Yet at length, when it seems they had better considered of it, they came to him, and worshipped him, and acknowledged his divine power, and that he was indeed the Son of God, Matt. xiv. 33. Then he caused the ship (which was now in the midst of the lake) to come suddenly to shore at the land of Genesareth. Immediately upon his arrival there (as soon as it was known) the people of that country took care that all the sick people thereabout should be brought to him; and they besought him that they might but only touch the border of his garment, thereby testifying their faith in him, and belief of his divine power: and as many as thus touched him were miraculously healed.

Useful REFLECTIONS and REMARKS.

All elements are alike to their Maker. He that had well approved his power on the land, will now shew it in the air and waters: he that had preserved the multitude from the peril of hunger in the desert, will now preserve his disciples from the peril of the tempest in the sea.

Where do we on other occasions find any compulsion offered by Christ to his disciples? He was like the good centurion; he said to one, "Go, and he goeth:" when he did but call them from their nets, they came; and when he sent them by pairs into the cities and country of Judæa, to preach the gospel, they went: there never was an errand whereon they went unwillingly: only now he constrained them to depart. We may easily conceive how loth they were to leave him, whether out of love, or common civility.

civility. Peter's tongue did but speak the heart of the rest: "Master, thou knowest that I love thee." Who could chuse but be in love with such a Master? And who can willingly part from what he loves? But had the respects been only common and ordinary, how unfit might it seem to leave a Master, now towards night, in a wild place, among strangers; unprovided with the means of his passage! where otherwise, therefore, he needed only to bid, now he constrains. O Saviour, it was ever thy manner to call all men unto thee: "Come to me, all that labour, and are heavy laden." When didst thou ever drive any one from thee? Neither had it been so now, but to draw them closer unto thee, whom thou seemedst for the time to quit: in the mean while, I know not whether more to excuse their unwillingness, or to applaud their obedience. As it shall be fully above, so it was proportionally here below, "In thy presence," (O Saviour) "is the fullness of joy." Once, when thou askedst these thy domestics, whether they also would depart? it was answered thee by one tongue for all, "Master, whither should we go from thee, thou hast the words of eternal life." What a death was it then to them to be compelled to leave thee? Sometimes it pleaseth the divine goodness to lay upon his servants such commands as favour of harshness and discomfort; which yet, both in his intention, and in the event, are no other than gracious and sovereign. The more difficulty was in the charge, the more praise was in the obedience. I do not hear them stand upon terms of capitulation with their Master; nor pleading importunately for their stay, but instantly, upon the command, they yield and go. We are never perfect disciples, till we can depart from our reason, from our will; yea, O Saviour, when thou biddest us, from thyself.

Neither will the multitude be gone without a dismissal. They had followed him while they were hungry, they will not leave him now they are fed; fain would they put that honour upon him; which to avoid, he is constrained to avoid them; gladly would they bestow a kingdom on him, as their acknowledgment for their late banquet: he shuns both it and them. O Saviour, when the hour of thy passion was come, thou couldst offer thyself readily to thine apprehenders, and now, when the glory of the world presses upon thee, thou runnest away from a crown: was it to teach us, that there is less danger in suffering than in outward prosperity? Why do we doat upon that worldly honour which thou didst hold worthy to be shunned and contemned?

Besides this reservedness, it was devotion that drew Jesus aside; he went alone up to the mountain to pray. Lo, thou, to whom the greatest throng was a solitude, in respect of the fruition of thy Father; thou who wert incapable of distraction from him with whom thou wert one, wouldst yet so much act like man, as to retire for the opportunity of prayer! to teach us, who are full of nothing but wild thoughts and giddy distractedness, to go aside, when we would speak with God. How happy is it for us that thou prayedst! O Saviour, thou prayedst for us, who have not grace enough to pray for ourselves, not worthy enough to be accepted when we do pray: thy prayers, which were most perfect and impetrative, are those by which our weak and unworthy prayers receive both life and favour. And now, how assiduous should we be in our supplications, who are empty of grace, full of wants; when thou, who wert a God of all power, prayedst for that which thou couldst command! Therefore do we pray, because thou prayedst: therefore do we expect to be graciously answered in our prayers, because thou didst pray for us here on earth; and now intercedest for us in heaven.

The evening was come: the disciples had long looked for their Master; and loth they were to have stirred without him; but his command was more than the strongest wind to fill their sails; and they are now gone: their expectation made not the evening seem so long; as our Saviour's devotion made it seem short to him. He is on the mount, they on the sea; yet, while he was on the mount praying, and lifting up his eyes to his Father, he fails not to cast them about upon his disciples, tossed on the waves. Those all-seeing eyes admit of no limits: at once he sees the highest heavens, and the midst of the sea; the glory of his Father, and the misery of his disciples; whatever prospects present themselves to his view, the distress of his followers is ever most noted.

How much more dost thou now, O Saviour, from the height of thy glorious advancement, behold us, thy wretched servants, tossed on the unquiet sea of this world, and beaten with the troublesome and threatening billows of affliction! Thou foresawest their toil and danger, before thou dismissedst them; and purposely sendest them away, that they might be tossed: thou that couldst prevent our sufferings by thy power, wilt permit them in thy wisdom, that thou mayest glorify thy mercy in our deliverance, and confirm our faith by the issue of our distresses.

How do all things now seem to conspire to the vexing of the poor disciples! The night was fullen and dark; their Master was absent, the sea was boisterous, the winds were high, and contrary: had their Master been with them, how much soever the elements had raged, they had been secure: had their Master been away, yet if the sea had been quiet, or the winds fair, the passage might have been endured: now, both season, and sea, and wind, and their Master's desertion, had combined to render them perfectly miserable. Sometimes the providence of God hath thought good so to order it, that to his best servants there appears no glimpse of comfort; but such absolute vexation, as if heaven and earth had plotted to cause their full measure of affliction: yea, O, Saviour, what a dead night, what a fearful tempest, what an astonishing dereliction was that, wherein thou thyself criedst out, in the bitterness of thine anguished soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—Yet, in all these extremities of misery, our gracious God intends nothing but his greater glory, and ours; the triumph of our faith, the crown of our victory.

All that lingering and tempestuous night must the disciples wear out in danger and horror, as given over to the winds and waves; but, in the fourth watch of the night, when they were wearied out with toils and fears, comes deliverance. At their entrance into the ship, at the rising of the tempest, at the shutting in of the evening, there was no news of Christ; but, when they have been all the night long beaten, not so much with storms and waves as with their own thoughts, now, in the fourth watch (which was near the morning), Jesus came to them, and purposely not till then: that he might exercise their patience; that he might enure them to wait upon divine providence, in cases of extremity, that their devotions might be more whetted by delay; that they might give a more joyful welcome to their deliverance. Oh God! thus thou thinkest fit to do still; we are by turns in our sea, the winds bluster, the billows swell, the night, and thy absence, heighten our discomfort: thy time and ours is set; as yet, it is but midnight with us: can we but hold out patiently till the fourth watch, thou wilt surely come, and rescue us. Oh let us not faint under our sorrows; but wear out our three watches of tribulation with undaunted patience and holy resolution!

O Saviour, our extremities are the seasons of thine aid: thou camest at last; but yet so, as that there was more dread than joy in thy presence; thy coming was both miraculous and frightful. Thou God of elements passedst through the air, walkedst upon the waters; whether thou didst mean to terminate this miracle in thy body, or in the waves, which thou trodest upon, so lightening the one that it should make no impression in the liquid waters; or whether so consolidating the other, that the paved waves yielded a firm pathway for thy sacred feet to walk on, I neither determine nor inquire; thy silence ruleth mine; thy power was in either miraculous: neither know I in which of these to adore it more. But withal, give me leave to wonder more at thy passage than at thy coming. Wherefore camest thou but to comfort them? and wherefore then wouldst thou pass by them, as if thou hadst intended nothing but their dismay? Thine absence could not be so grievous as thy passing by: that might seem justly occasioned, this could not but seem willingly neglective. Our last conflicts are most commonly the forest; as when, after some dripping rain, it pours down vehemently, we think the weather is changing to fair and serene.

O Saviour, we must not always measure thy meaning by thy appearance; sometimes, what thou most intendest, thou shewest least. In our afflictions thou turnest thy back upon us, and hidest thy face from us when thou most mindest our distresses: so

Jonathan shot the arrows beyond David, when he meant them to him; so Joseph calls for Benjamin into bonds, when his heart was bound to him in the strongest affection; so the tender mother makes as if she would give away her crying child, whom she hugs so much the closer in her bosom.

If thou pass by us while we are struggling with the tempest, we know it is not for want of mercy; thou canst not neglect us. Oh, let us not distrust thee!

What object should have been so pleasing to the eyes of the disciples as their Master! and so much the more, as he shewed his divine power in this miraculous walk! but lo, contrarily, "they are troubled;" not with his presence, but with the circumstances attending his presence.

The supernatural works of God, when we look upon them with our own eyes, are subject to a dangerous misinterpretation: the very sun-beams, to which we are beholden for our sight, if we eye them directly, blind us: miserable men! we are ready to suspect truths, to run away from our safety, to be afraid of our comforts, to mistake our best friends.

And why are they thus troubled? "They had thought they had seen a spirit:" that there have been such apparitions of spirits, both good and evil, hath ever been a truth undoubtedly received by Pagans, Jews, and Christians; though in the dark times of superstition there was much collusion mixed with some realities: crafty men, and lying spirits, agreed to abuse the credulous world. But, even where there was not truth, yet there was horror; the very good angels were not seen without much fear; their sight was construed to forebode death: how much more the evil, which in their very nature are hurtful and pernicious! We see not a snake or a toad without some recoiling of blood, and sensible reluctance, though these creatures run away from us; how much more must our hairs stand upright, and our senses boil at the very sight of a spirit whose nature and will are both contrary to ours, and professedly bent to our hurt!

But, say it had been what they mistook it for, a spirit; why should they fear? Had they well considered, they had soon found that evil spirits are never the less present when they are not seen; and never the less noxious or malicious when they are present unseen. Visibility adds nothing to their spite or mischief; and could their eyes have been opened, they had, with Elisha's servant, seen more with them than against them; a sure, though invisible guard of more powerful spirits; and themselves under the protection of the God of spirits; so as they might have bidden a bold defiance to all the powers of darkness. But, partly, their faith was yet but in the bud, and, partly, the presentation of this dreadful object was sudden, and without the respite of a recollection and due settlement of their thoughts.

Oh the weakness of our frail nature! that we, in the want of faith, should be affrighted with the visible appearance of those adversaries whom we profess daily to resist and vanquish; and with whom we know the decree of God hath matched us in an everlasting conflict! Are not these they who ejected devils by the command given them? Are not these of them that could say, 'Master, the evil spirits are subdued to us?' yet now, when they see but an imagined spirit, they fear. What power there is in the eye to betray the heart!

While Goliath was mingled with the rest of the Philistine host, Israel encamped boldly against them; but when that giant stalks out, single, between the two armies, and fills and amazes their eyes with his hideous stature, now they run away for fear! Behold, we are encompassed with legions of evil spirits, and complain not; let but one of them give us some visible token of his presence, we presently shriek and tremble, and are not ourselves.

Neither is our weakness more conspicuous than thy mercy, O God, in restraining these spiritual enemies from these dreadful and ghastly representations of themselves to our eyes; for, might those infernal spirits have liberty to appear, how, and when, and to whom they would, certainly not many would be left in their wits, or, in their lives; it is thy power and goodness to frail mankind that they are kept in their chains, and reserved

served in the darknes of their own spiritual being, that we may be enabled both to resist and subdue them unseen.

But Oh the deplorable condition of reprobate souls! if but the imagined sight of one of these spirits of darknes can so daunt the heart of those who are free from their power, what a terror will it be to live perpetually in the fight, yea, under the torture of thousands, of legions, of millions of devils! Oh the madness of wilful sinners, who will needs wilfully rush headlong into so dreadful a damnation!

It was now high time for our Saviour to speak. What with the tempest, what with the apparition, the disciples were almost swallowed up with fear. How seasonable are his gracious addressees! Till they were thus affrighted, he would not speak; when they were thus affrighted, he would not hold his peace. If his presence seemed fearful, yet his word was comfortable: "Be of good cheer, it is I;" yea, it is his word only, which must make his presence both known and comfortable. He was present before; they mistook him, and feared; there needs no other expression to raise their drooping hearts, but "It is I." It is a sufficient cordial to us, in the worst of our afflictions, to be assured of Christ's presence with us; say but "It is I," O Saviour, and let evils do their worst: thou needest not say any more; thy voice was evidence enough; so well were the disciples acquainted with the tongue of thee their master, that "It is I" was as much as an hundred names. Thou art the good shepherd; we are not of thy flock, if we know thee not, by thy voice, from a thousand. Even this one is a great word, yea, an ample style, "It is I." The same tongue that said to Moses, "I AM hath sent thee," saith now to the disciples, "It is I;" I, your Lord and master; I, the commander of winds and waters; I, the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth; I, the God of spirits: let heaven be but as one scroll, and let it be written all over with titles, they cannot express more than "It is I." Oh sweet and seasonable word of a gracious Saviour, able to calm all tempests, able to revive all hearts; say but this precious word to my soul, and in spite of hell, I am safe.

No sooner hath Jesus said "I," than Peter answers "Master:" he can instantly name him, that did not name himself. Every little hint is enough to faith; the church sees her Beloved, as well through the lattice, as through the open window. Which of all the followers of Christ, gave such pregnant testimonies, upon all occasions, of his faith, of his love to his Master, as Peter? The rest were silent, while he both owned his Master, and craved access to him in that liquid way. Yet what an evident mixture is here of faith and distrust! It is faith that said, Master; it was distrust, (as some have construed it) that said, "If it be thou:" it was faith that said, "Bid me come to thee:" (implying, that his word could as well enable, as command); it was faith that durst step down upon that watery pavement: it was distrust that, upon the sight of a mighty wind, feared; it was faith, that he walked; it was distrust, that he sunk; it was faith that said, "Lord save me." Oh the imperfect composition of the best saint upon earth! as far from pure faith, as from mere infidelity. If there be pure earth in the center, all upward is mixed with the other elements: pure grace is above in the glorified spirits; all below is mixed with infirmity, with corruption: our best is but as the air; which never was, never can be at once fully enlightened: neither is there in the same region, one constant state of light; it will once be noon with us, when we will have nothing but bright beams of glory; now it is but the dawning, wherein it is hard to say, whether there be more light than darknes: we are now fair as the moon, which hath some spots in her greatest beauty; we shall be pure as the sun, whose face is all bright and glorious. Ever since the time that Adam set his tooth in the apple, till our mouth be full of mould, it never was, it never can be otherwise with us. Far be it from us to settle willingly upon the dregs of our infidelity: far be it from us to be disheartened with the sense of our defects and imperfections; "We believe; Lord, help our unbelief."

While I find some disputing the lawfulness of Peter's suit: others quarrelling with his "If it be thou;" let me be taken up with wonder at the faith, the fervour, the heroical valour of this prime apostle, that durst say, "Bid me come to thee upon the waters." He might have suspected, that the voice of his Master might have been as easily imitated by that imagined spirit, as his person; he might have feared the blustering tempest, the threatening billows, the yielding nature of that devouring element; but, despising all these thoughts

thoughts of surmise, such is his desire to be near his Master, that he says, "Bid me come to thee upon the waters." He says not, "Come thou to me." This had been Christ's act, and not his: neither doth he say, "Let me come to thee:" this had been his act, and not Christ's: neither doth he say, "Pray that I may come to thee," as if this act had been out of the power of either; but, "Bid me come to thee; I know thou canst command both the waves and me; me, to be so light that I shall not bruise the moist surface of the waves; the waves to be so solid, that they shall not yield to my weight; all things obey thee, bid me come to thee upon the waters."

It was a bold spirit that could wish it, more bold that could act it. No sooner hath our Saviour said "Come," than he sets his foot upon the unquiet sea, not fearing either the softness or the roughness of that uncouth passage; if we are apt to wonder at the courage of that daring man, who first committed himself to the sea in a frail bark, though he had the strength of an oaken plank to secure him; how valiant must we needs grant him to be, that durst set his foot upon the bare sea, and shift his steps! Well did Peter know, that he who bade him could uphold him; and therefore he both sues to be bidden, and ventures to be upholden. True faith taiks itself with difficulties; neither can be dismayed with the conceits of ordinary impossibilities: it is not the scattering of straws, nor casting of mole-hills, whereby the virtue of it is discerned, but removing of mountains. Like some courageous leader, it desires the honour of a danger, and sues for the first onset; whereas the worldly heart freezes in a lazy or cowardly fear, and only seeks for safety and ease.

Peter sues, Jesus bids: rather will he work miracles, than disappoint the suit of a faithful man. How easily might our Saviour have thus retorted this strange request of his bold disciple, and have said, 'What my omnipotence can do, is no rule for thy weakness; it is no less than presumption in a mere man, to hope to imitate the miraculous works of God and man; stay thou in the ship and wonder, contenting thyself in this, that thou hast a Master, to whom the land and water are alike:' yet I hear not a check, but a call: "Come." The suit of ambition is suddenly quashed in the mother of the Zebedees; the suits of revenge prove no better in the mouths of the two fiery disciples; but a suit of faith, though high, and seemingly unfit for us, he hath no power to deny. How much less, O Saviour, wilt thou stick at those things which lay in the very road of Christianity! Never man said, Bid me to come to thee in the way of thy commandments, whom thou didst not both bid, and enable to come.

True faith rests not in great and good desires, but acts and executes accordingly. Peter does not wish to go; and yet stand still; but his foot answers his tongue, and instantly drops down upon the waters. To sit still and wish, is for sluggish and cowardly spirits.

Formal volitions, yea velleities of good, while we will not so much as step out of the ship of our nature, to walk to Christ, are but the faint motions of vain hypocrisy. It will be long enough before the gale of good wishes can carry us to our haven; ease slayeth the foolish. O Saviour, we have thy command to come to thee out of the ship of our natural corruption; let no sea affright us, let no tempest of temptation with-hold us: every way must be safe that leads to thee, the end.

Lo, Peter is walking upon the waves! Two hands uphold him; the hand of Christ's power, the power of mighty faith! neither of them would do it alone; the hand of Christ's power laid hold on him: the hand of his faith laid hold on the power of Christ commanding: had not Christ's hand been powerful, that faith had been in vain; had not that faith of his strongly fixed upon Christ, that power had not been effectual for his preservation. While we are here in the world, we walk upon the waters; still the same hands bear us up: if Christ let go his hold of us, we drown; if we let go our hold of him, we sink and shriek, as Peter did here; who, when he saw the wind boisterous, was afraid; and beginning to sink, cried, saying, "Lord, save me."

When he wished to be bidden to walk to Christ, he thought of the waters; "Bid me come to thee on the waters," he thought not on the winds, which raged on those waters; or if he thought of a hard gale, yet that tempestuous and sudden gust was out of his account and expectation. Those evils that we are prepared for, have not such power over us, as those

that surprize us. A good waterman fees a dangerous billow coming towards him, and cuts it, and mounts over it with ease; the careless is overwhelmed. O Saviour, let my haste to thee be zealous, but not improvident; before I set my foot out of the ship, let me foresee the tempest; when I have surmounted the worst, I cannot either miscarry or complain.

As soon as he began to fear, he began to sink: while he believed, the sea was brass; when once he began to distrust, those waves were water. He cannot sink while he trusts the power of his Master; he cannot but sink when he doubts of it. Our faith gives us not only courage and boldness, but success too: our infidelity lays us open to all dangers, to all mischiefs.

It was Peter's improvidence not to foresee, it was his weakness to fear; it was the effect of his fear to sink; it was his faith that recollects itself, and breaks through his infidelity; and, in sinking, could say, "Lord, save me:" his foot could not be so swift in sinking, as his heart in imploring; he knew who could uphold him from sinking, and, when sunk, deliver him: and therefore he says, "Lord, save me!"

It is an undoubted sign and effect of true faith, in sudden extremities, to ejaculate holy desires; and with the wings of our first thoughts, to fly up instantly to the throne of grace for present succour. Upon deliberation, it is possible for a man that hath been careless and profane, by good means, to be drawn to holy dispositions; but on a sudden, the man will appear as he is; whatever most abounds in the heart, will come forth at the mouth. It is good to observe how our surprisals find us; the rest is but forced; this is natural; "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh," O Saviour, no evil can be swifter than my thought; fix my thought upon thee, before I can be seized upon by the speediest mischief; then at least, if I over-run not evils, I shall escape damage by them.

It was Christ, his Lord, whom Peter had offended by distrust; it is Christ, his Lord, to whom he flies for deliverance; his weaknesses do not discourage him from his refuge. O God, when we have displeased thee, when we have sunk in thy displeasure, whither should we fly for aid but to thee, whom we have provoked! "Against thee only is our sin:" in thee only is our help; in vain shall all the powers of heaven and earth conspire to relieve us, if thou withhold our succour: as we offend thy justice daily by our sins, so let us continually rely upon thy mercy, by the strength of our faith, "Lord save us!"

The mercy of Christ is at once sought and found; "Immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him." He does not say, 'Hadst thou trusted me, I would safely have preserved thee; but, since thou wilt needs wrong my power and care with a cowardly diffidence, sink and drown;' but rather, as pitying the infirmity of his fearful disciple, he puts out the hand for his relief. That hand hath been stretched forth for the aid of many a one that hath never asked it; never have any asked it, to whose succour it hath not been employed. With what speed, with what confidence, should we flee to that sovereign bounty, from which never any suitor was sent empty away!

Jesus gave Peter his hand; but withal he gave him a check: "O thou of little faith, why doubtedst thou?" As Peter's faith was not pure, but mixed with some distrust; so our Saviour's help was not clear and absolute, but mixed with some reproof: a reproof wherein there was both a censure and an exhortation; a censure of his faith, an exhortation for his doubt; both of them fore and heavy.

By how much more excellent and useful a grace faith is, by so much more shameful is the defect of it; and the more reason here was of confidence, so much more blame-worthy was the doubt. Now Peter had a double reason for his confidence; the command of Christ and the power of Christ: the one, in bidding him come; the other, in sustaining him while he came; to mistrust him whose will he knew, whose power he felt, well deserved a reprehension.

When I saw Peter stepping forth upon the waters, I could not but wonder at his great faith; yet, behold, before he can have measured many paces, the Judge of hearts taxes him for little faith. Our mountains are but motes to God; would my heart have enabled me to dare the doing of what Peter did? Durst I have set my foot where he did? O Saviour, if thou didst find cause to censure the weakness and poverty of his faith, what mayest thou well

well say to mine! They mistake, that think thou wilt take up with any thing; thou lookest for firmness and vigour in those graces which thou wilt allow in thy best disciples, no less than truth.

The first steps were confident, but there was fear in the next. Oh the sudden alteration of our affections and dispositions! One pace varies our spiritual condition. What hold is there of such fickle creatures, if we be left ever so little to ourselves! As this lower world, wherein we are, is the region of mutability, so are we (the living pieces of it) subject to a perpetual change: it is for the blessed saints and angels above to be fixed in good; while we are here, there can be no constancy expected from us but in variableness.

Well as our Saviour loves Peter, yet he chides him. It is the fruit of his favour and mercy that we escape judgment, not that we escape reproof. Had not Peter found grace with his Master, he had been suffered to sink in silence: now he is saved with a check; there may be more love in frowns than in smiles; whom he loves, he chastises: what is chiding but a verbal chastising? and what is chastisement but a real chiding? "Correct me, O Lord, yet in thy judgment, not in thy fury." Oh let the righteous God smite me (when I offend) with his gracious reproofs: these shall be a precious oil that shall not break my head.

The multitude that had been miraculously fed, knowing that Christ had not gone with his disciples, and that there was no other boat there that could transport him, did the next day expect (as it seems) that they should find him on the mountain to which he went to retire himself. But finding him gone as well as his disciples, they (being provided of other boats for their passage, which it seems had newly come from Tiberias) go in haste to Capernaum, and there they find him, and enquire concerning his getting to that place, suspecting possibly that he came in a miraculous way, John vi. from 22 to 26. In answer to whom, Christ first discovers their corrupt ends in seeking of him, being not so much affected with his glory, shining in that miracle they had seen, as because they did eat of the loaves and were filled, ver. 26. Secondly, He directs them to take pains for better food, namely, the spiritual, which he promises to give by the actual application of himself and his benefits to every one that would sincerely seek after him; he being authorized and commissioned by the Father to be the Saviour and helper of lost sinners, ver. 27.

Hereupon they desire to be directed what they must do, and what he would prescribe them for the attaining of this spiritual food; he points out faith in himself as the only way, ver. 28. 29.

They, before they will believe in him, require he would shew some greater signs to confirm his doctrine, and prove himself to be the Messiah, than hitherto he had done, seeing Moses (whose scholars they professed to be) had done greater works than this he had done of miraculously feeding them with barley loaves for one time; for Moses had fed their fathers in the wilderness, who were no less than six hundred thousand persons, and that for the space of forty years together, with excellent manna from heaven; and possibly they expected that Christ should in some such manner feed them now, ver. 31, 32.

Christ, upon this mention of manna, sets out the excellency of the bread offered by him above manna. For first, with respect to the manna, it was not Moses (of whom they gloried in opposition to him) that gave it them, but the Father. Secondly, It was not given from heaven, that is the celestial heaven, but only from the air and clouds, which sometimes in the Old Testament is called heaven. But this spiritual food of which he spake, which is himself, was given and sent by the Father from the highest heaven, even the heaven of glory, the royal palace of the King of heaven and earth. Thirdly, That though manna was a sacrament and type of Christ, and in that sense is called spiritual meat, 1 Cor. x. 3. yet it was not true spiritual food effectively, and of itself, but only bodily food. But he himself is true bread from heaven, that is, real spiritual food, and the substance and truth of what manna typified; and gives life to lost and dead men, which manna could not do. And whereas manna was peculiar
to

to Israel only, he is appointed to give life to all sorts of persons, Gentiles as well as Jews, ver. 32, 33.

They hearing of such bread so highly commended, but conceiving of it still (as it seems) but in a carnal manner, desire they may partake of it constantly, [see John iv. 15.] ver. 34.

Christ hereupon declares more plainly what and who this bread of life is, and shews the way of partaking of it, which is by coming to him, and believing in him (chap. v. 40.) And he points out the excellency thereof by another effect, which is, that they who embrace him, though they will long after more of him, yet will they never again hunger after other things as the way to happiness, nor shall any more pine under the destroying hunger of a total want of grace; but, being once partakers of him, shall find all-sufficiency in him, and complete food and refreshment from him, for preserving and perpetuating their spiritual life, ver. 35.

Then discovering unto them their perverseness, in that they had seen him and the miracles he had wrought, and were convinced who he was, and yet would not believe in him; he shewed, that "all those the Father had given him," would come unto him, and should find all tender usage and welcome from him, and should in no wise be rejected. And this he farther confirms by shewing the end of his incarnation and coming into the world, and by rehearsing a part of his commission to them; wherein he shews, that he came not to do his own will only, but the Father's also, and so had sufficient warrant for what he did; and this was his Father's will, that they who are given him (to be under his charge, and to participate of his benefits) should be drawn to believe in him, and so should be preserved from perishing, and their bodies should be raised up at the last day. For whoever knows the Son, and believes in him, the Father hath decreed that he shall not perish, but have everlasting life, from ver. 36 to 41.

The Jews carp at this, that he (whom they supposed to be only the Son of Joseph and Mary, being ignorant of his divine nature and miraculous conception) should speak such great things of himself, namely, "that he was the bread of life," and that "he came down from heaven," ver. 41, 42.

Our Saviour in his reply to them shews, that the cause and root of their unbelief was something in themselves, namely, their natural impotence to any thing that was good, and their averfeness from him; which also is the condition of all men, till the Father doth by the divine power of his grace draw them; then all that are thus effectually drawn, do come unto him the true Messiah, and he will be accountable for them. He confirms his assertion concerning his Father's drawing, from the prophecies of the Old Testament, which speak of the days of the Messiah, wherein it is foretold, that all the elect shall "be taught of God" to embrace Christ offered in the gospel, (Isa. liv. 13. Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.); whence he infers, that every one who is thus taught, will come unto him, and believe in him. And he farther shews, that God's teaching doth not import that man must first see God, and be taught of the Father apart and without him: for not only is the Father invisible to the eye of the body, but also there is no immediate sight or knowledge of the Father in his will or ways about saving sinners, but what Christ, who is the Son of God, imparteth and teacheth; and therefore all others must be taught not immediately by the Father, but mediately by the Son, ver. 43, 44, 45, 46.

Christ having thus far digressed to shew the cause of their unbelief, he returns now to press the former doctrine, namely, that himself is the object of saving faith, and that eternal life is to be had only in and by him, and that he is the "bread of life," the "living bread," which preserves those from eternal death who eat of it, which is more than manna could do. For though their fathers did eat it as a sacrament, pointing out Christ (as was intimated before from 1 Cor. x. 3.) yet many of them perished eternally; but the partaker of this bread shall live eternally in bliss and glory. And he shews, that he is this bread by reason of his incarnation, and taking on him our flesh and nature, and by his giving of it as a ransom for sin; and his offering up himself in that nature,

is (as it were) the preparing of him to be fit food for our faith to feed upon, from ver. 47 to 52.

The Jews, understanding him still carnally, stumbled at what he said; for they thought it was inhuman to eat man's flesh, and his body could not be food that way to all the world. Christ does not alter his words, but presses more and more the necessity of believing in him, and closing with him as crucified, under the terms of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood; and shews, that they who neglect to do this, can have no spiritual life in them, but are dead in their sins: but such as sincerely close with him, have eternal life in the bud, and shall be raised up at the last day fully to enjoy it. He farther shews that his food is not imaginary, but real food, able to confer and preserve life: and that there is a real union betwixt him, and those who feed on him: for as meat is turned into the eater's substance, so believers and he become one, and upon feeding on him (that is, believing) there follows a mutual inhabitation, he dwelling in them, and they in him. Upon this spiritual feeding they are united to him, and abide in him, and he abides in them by his Spirit and quickening virtue. And as there is a real union between the Father and him, and as the Father lives who sent him, having an eternal fountain of life in himself and he the Son lives by the Father, having the same life communicated to him with his essence from the Father; so they who feed on him shall live by him (see chap. v. 26); this life of the Father and the Son being a sure pledge that believers shall live by a life derived from the Son on whom they believe: from ver. 52 to 60.

These words sounded so harshly, that not only the common multitude, but some even of those that had given up their names to follow him, could not tell how to bear them. Christ reproves their unjust and causeless stumbling at what he had said, and that they should think it strange that he who appeared in so much outward meanness, should say he came down from heaven; wherefore he tells them that his ascension into heaven should prove the truth of that to their conviction and shame. For the ascension of his human nature by local change of place, would clearly prove that he came down from heaven in respect of his divine nature's stooping to be cloathed with our flesh. His ascension would prove his godhead, and that he came down from heaven, seeing he should arise and ascend by his own power. He farther shews, that by eating his flesh, he did not mean a carnal fleshly eating, for that could profit them nothing; but it is a spiritual eating of him by faith that bringeth that quickening life of which he had spoken; neither is this life given by eyeing or looking to his flesh only, considered in itself and without his godhead; for all the quickening virtue that is ascribed to his flesh or human nature, doth flow from his godhead to which it is united. It is the spirit or divine nature that quickeneth, and therefore he is to be laid hold on by faith as God incarnate, and not to be looked on as a mere man, or as one whose flesh is to be eaten in a bodily manner. And so he declares, that these words of his are not to be taken in a carnal and gross sense, but in a spiritual; and being so taken, and himself being spiritually fed upon, this doctrine will not be found hard, but will bring life and refreshment to the fainting soul, and they that so understand it will find it lively in operation, ver. 60, 61, 62, 63.

Christ, having cleared his doctrine, points out the true cause of their stumbling, which was their unbelief, and reminds them of what he had said before; that the cause of their not coming to him, and believing in him, was their natural impotence and corrupt disposition, which could only be remedied by God, ver. 64, 65.

He having dealt thus plainly and clearly with them, from that time many thousand unsound professors did wholly forsake him. Upon this he asks his apostles whether they would go away also, intimating, that their departure would touch him more nearly than the departure and defection of all the rest. Simon Peter, in the name of the rest, answers, that they knew none besides to whom they could go, and rationally expect that happiness they did from him: for his doctrine pointed out the only way to salvation, and, being embraced and followed, doth give a right to eternal life; and they had a firm belief and assurance that he was the true Messiah, the Son of God. Peter having made
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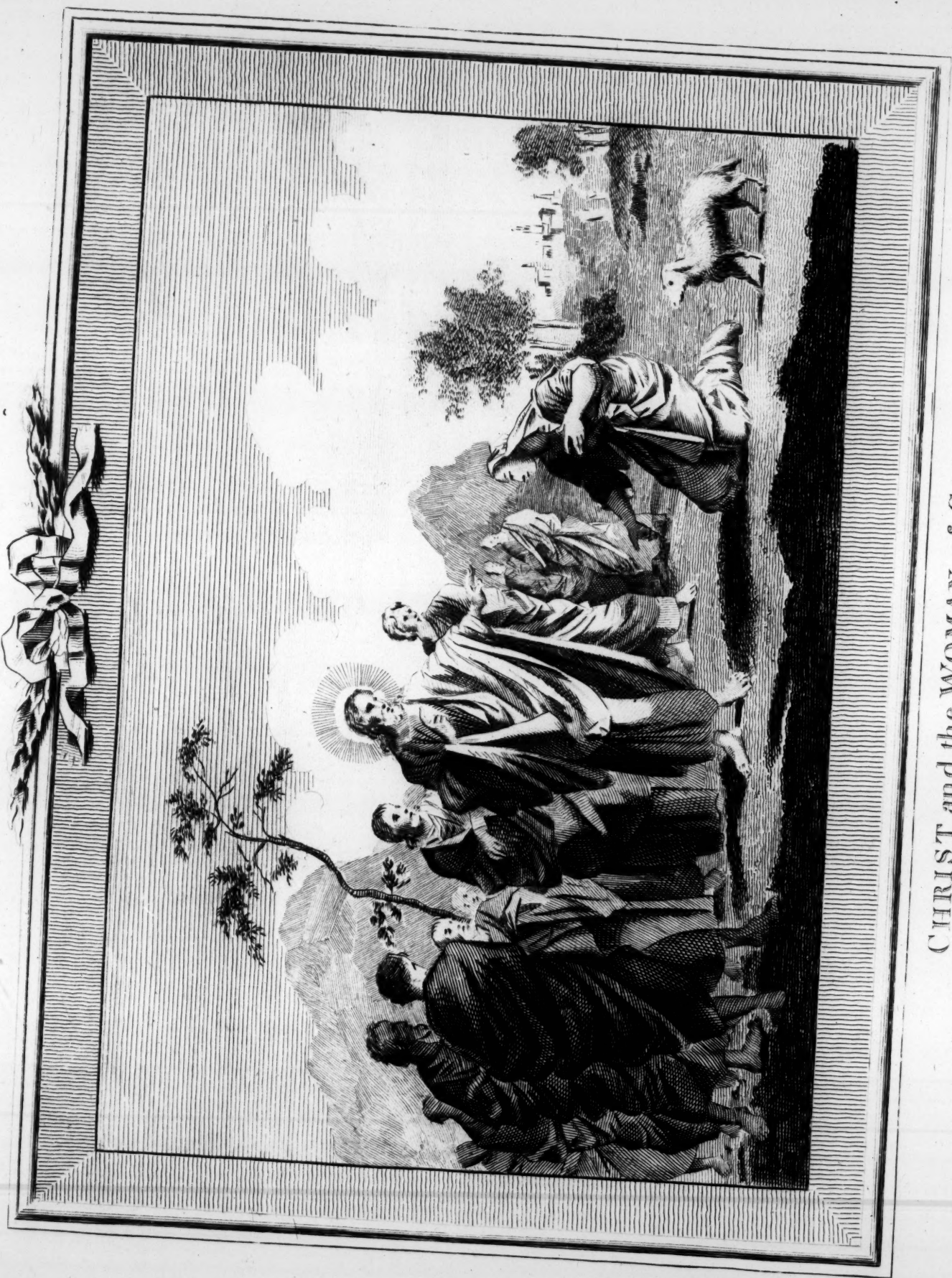
this profession for himself, and all the rest of the twelve, Christ intimates, that his charity was something too large in promising so much for them all; for there was one traitor among them, of whose falseness and unsoundness he now gives them warning (from ver. 66 to the end).

About this time our Saviour went to the passover at Jerusalem, as may be gathered from John vi. 4. "The passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh." For we cannot suppose that he who came "to fulfil all righteousness," would neglect to be present at Jerusalem at this passover, any more than he had done before. At the passover last year, the Jews cited him before them, to answer for the violation of the Sabbath (as they supposed) in healing an infirm man on that day; at which time he plainly affirmed, and proved himself to be the Messiah, and came off with safety; but now the increasing of his disciples, and the spreading of his fame and doctrine, by the preaching of the twelve, had so enraged them, that they sought his life, as appears from John vii. 1. which he understanding, made but a short stay at Jerusalem at this time, and retired into Galilee, resolving not to come into Judæa again till the feast of tabernacles.

Being in Galilee, certain scribes and pharisees come from Jerusalem to him, and quarrel with him, because his disciples ate with unwashen hands, not observing the tradition of the elders. Hereupon he sharply reproves them for their hypocrisy, and applies to them what the prophet Isaiah had charged upon the Jews of his times, chap. xxix. 13. concerning their hypocritical and superstitious worshipping of God, and answers them by way of recrimination, shewing, that while his disciples transgressed only the traditions of men, they, through their traditions and false glosses, made void the commandments of God; of this he gives an instance in a precept of the moral law, viz. the fifth commandment, and in a precept or ordinance of the judicial law, enjoining the penalty of death to be inflicted on such children as cursed their parents, Exod. xxi. 17. "He that curseth his father and mother, shall surely be put to death," Lev. xx. 9. "Every one that curseth his father or his mother, shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother, his blood shall be upon him." Now he sheweth that their traditions made void this law (Mark vii. 11, 12, 13.), and hindered children from doing their duty to their parents: for it seems their traditions warranted children to dedicate, as a religious offering or gift to God, all that they could spare above their own maintenance; and therefore when their parents, being poor, should seek help and support from them, they might answer thus, 'That by which thou mightest be helped by me, is a gift already dedicated to God, and therefore I am free from helping thee;' and so under pretence of gifts and offerings made to God, which he did not require, they neglected a duty they owed their parents, 1 Tim. v. 4. 8. which he did require; and thus they annulled the laws of God by their traditions.

Having in this manner rebuked the scribes and pharisees, he would not vouchsafe any further conference with them; but taking occasion from their cavil against his disciples, "for eating with unwashen hands," as if that had defiled them before God, he turns his speech to the multitude, and instructs them in a necessary and profitable point of Christian doctrine, viz. touching the true spring and fountain of spiritual pollution and uncleanness, viz. that it is not any outward thing, or any thing from without a man, which, entering into him, can, or doth, of itself, and of its own nature, make him unclean before God; but the true spring and fountain of spiritual pollution is within, and issues out of the heart of man: so that it is not meat which goeth into the mouth, but evil words (issuing from a naughty heart) which come out of the mouth that truly and properly defile a man. His disciples tell him, that the pharisees were much offended at this doctrine, as overthrowing a great part of Pharisaism. He replies, that "every plant which his heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up;" therefore they should not trouble themselves about them, but endeavour to undeceive those whom they have misled, lest they perish with them; for they are blind leaders of the blind, and so both themselves, and those that are misled by them, are in danger of perishing together. Then, seeing his disciples did not yet clearly understand this doctrine, that "meats did not defile," he opens it to them more fully in private, shewing them, that "that which goeth not to the proper place or seat of spiritual uncleanness, which is the heart, soul, and spirit





CHRIST and the WOMAN of CANAAN.

spirit of man," cannot make him "spiritually" unclean before God: neither can that which remains not in a man, but is purged out into the draught, defile him: that which makes a man loathsome before God, is that which defiles the inner man; namely, the "sin that cometh from the heart" beginning there, and from thence flowing forth, and spreading to the outward man and outward conversation, and leaving a stain and blemish upon it.

About this time, departing from the country of Gennesareth, Jesus retires himself into the borders of Tyre and Sidon; but he could not long be private there; for a certain woman that was a Syro-phœnician by nation, hearing of his miracles, came to him, and earnestly besought him to cure her daughter, "who was grievously vexed with a devil." At first he refuses to speak to her; but his disciples pressing him to send her away, because she cried after them, he at length spake to her, but in such a manner as tended to her great discouragement. He tells her, "he was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (who went astray, and erred, through the ignorance and negligence of their pastors), and not to the Gentiles, such as she was. But she humbly prostrating herself before him, and pressing him again with great importunity to help her, he gives her a two-fold reason, why she was not to expect it: 1. The Israelites, who were before all nations of the earth God's adopted children (see Exod. iv. 22), were, in the first place, to be called by his doctrine and miracles, and so to be fed and filled (as it were) with the spiritual bread of the gospel. 2. It was unfit that this bread should be cast (at least as yet) to the dogs, that is, made common to all. The woman, as if considering herself to be no better than a dog, in comparison of those for whom the provision was intended, said, that even the dogs were permitted to eat the crumbs under the children's table. Immediately upon this saying, Jesus, seeing her faith and importunity, granted her request, and cast out the devil that possessed her daughter.

Useful REFLECTIONS and REMARKS.

It is long since we heard of the name or nation of Canaanites; and though all the country was once so styled, that people was now forgotten; yet, because this woman was of the blood of those Phœnicians, which were anciently ejected out of Canaan, that title is revived to her. God keeps account of pedigrees after we have forgotten them; that he may magnify his mercies by continuing them to thousands of the generations of the just, and by renewing favours upon the unjust. No nation ever carried such brands and scars of a curse as Canaan; notwithstanding, to the shame of those careless Jews, even a believing Canaanite is a suppliant to Christ, while they neglect so great salvation. She doth not speak, but cry; need and desire have raised her voice to an importunate clamour: the God of mercy is not hard of hearing, yet he loves a loud and vehement solicitation; not so much to make himself inclinable to grant, as to make us capable to receive blessings. They are words, and not prayers, which fall from careless lips: if we felt our want, or wanted not desire, we could speak to God in no tune but cries; if we would prevail with God, we must wrestle; and if we would wrestle successfully with God, we must wrestle first with our own dullness. Nothing but cries can pierce heaven: neither doth her vehemence so much argue her faith, as the appellation wherewith she addressed the Saviour: "O Lord, thou Son of David!" What profelyte, what disciple could have said more? O blessed Syro-phœnician, who taught thee this abstract of divinity? What can we Christians confess more than the Godhead, the humanity, and Messiahship of our glorious Saviour? His Godhead, as Lord; his humanity, as a Son; his Messiahship, as the Son of David. Of all the famous progenitors of Christ, two are more particularly singled out, David and Abraham; a king, a patriarch; and though the patriarch was first in time, yet the king is first in place; not so much for the dignity of the person, as the excellence of the promise, which as it was both later and fresher in memory, consequently more honourable. To Abraham was promised multitude,

tude, and blessing of seed; to David, perpetuity of dominion. So when God promises not to destroy his people, it is for Abraham's sake; when not to extinguish the kingdom, it is for David's sake. Had this woman said, 'Thou Son of Abraham,' she had not come home to this acknowledgment: Abraham is the father of the faithful; David, of the kings of Judah and Israel. There are many faithful; there is but one King; therefore in this title she proclaims him the perpetual King of his church, the rod or flower which should come from the root of Jesse; the true and only Saviour of the world. Whoever would so come to Christ to good purpose, must come in the right style; apprehending a true God, a true man, a true God and man; any of these severed from the other, makes Christ an idol; and our prayers, sin. Being thus acknowledged, what suit is so fit for him as mercy? "Have mercy on me." It was her daughter that was tormented; yet she says, "Have mercy on me:" perhaps her possessed child was insensible of her misery; so the parent feels both her sorrow and her own. As she was a good woman, so a good mother. Grace and a maternal affection have taught her to appropriate the afflictions of this divided part of her own flesh. It is not in the power of another skin to sever the interest of our own loins or womb; we find some fowls that burn themselves, while they endeavour to blow out the fire from their young; and even serpents can receive their brood into their mouth, to shield them from danger: no creature is so unnatural as the reasonable that hath put off affection.

"On me," therefore on mine; "for my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." This sent her to Christ; this must incline Christ to her: I doubt whether she had inquired after Christ, if she had not been vexed with her daughter's spirit. Our afflictions are as Benhadad's best counsellors, that sent him with a cord about his neck to the merciful king of Israel. These are the files and whetstones that set an edge on our devotions; without which they grow dull and ineffectual: neither are they stronger motives to our suit than to Christ's mercy; we cannot have a better spokesman to God than our own misery; that alone sues, and pleads and importunes for us: this, which sets off men whose compassion is finite, attracts God to us; who can plead discouragements in his access to the throne of grace, when our wants are our forcible advocates? All our worthiness is in a sense of misery.

All Israel could not copy the faith of this Canaanite; yet she was thus tormented in her daughter. It is not the truth or strength of our faith that can secure us from the outward and bodily vexations of Satan; or against the inward and spiritual that can and will prevail: it is no better an antidote against the other, than against fevers and drop-sies: how indeed should it, when it may fall out that these sufferings may be profitable? and why should we expect that the love of our God shall yield to withhold any benefit from the soul? He is an ill patient that cannot distinguish betwixt an affliction and the evil of affliction. When the messenger of Satan buffets us, it is enough that God hath said, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

Millions were in Tyre and Sidon, whose persons, whose children were untouched with that tormenting hand; I hear none but this faithful woman say, "My daughter is grievously vexed of the devil:" the worst of bodily afflictions are not a sufficient proof of divine displeasure; she who had most grace, complains of most discomfort.

Who would now expect any other than a kind answer to so pious and faithful a petition? And behold, "He answered her not a word." O holy Saviour! we have often found cause to wonder at thy words; never, till now, at thy silence: a miserable suppliant cries and sues, while the God of mercies is speechless; he that comforts the afflicted, adds affliction to the comfortless, by a willing disrespect. What shall we say then? Is the fountain of mercy dried up? Oh, Saviour, couldst thou but hear! she did not murmur, not whisper, but cry out; couldst thou but pity, but regard her, that were to be as good as she was miserable. If thy ears were open, could thy bowels be shut? Certainly it was thou who didst put it into the heart, into the mouth of this woman, to ask, and to ask thus of thyself; she could never have said, "O Lord, thou Son of David," but from thee, but by thee. None calleth Jesus the Lord but by the Holy Ghost; much more therefore didst thou hear the words of thine own making, and well wert thou

thou pleased to hear what thou thoughtest good to forbear to answer; it was thine own grace that sealed up thy lips.

Was this for the trial of her patience and perseverance? for silence carried a semblance of neglect; and a willing neglect lays strong siege to the best fort of the soul. Even calm tempers, when they have been stirred, have bewrayed impetuosity of passion. If there be any dregs in the bottom of the glass, when the water is shaken, they will be soon seen; or whether for the better sharpening of her desires, and raising of her zealous importunity (our holy longings are increased with delays; it whets our appetite to be kept fasting); or whether for the better sweetening of the blessing by the difficulty or delay of obtaining it. The benefit that comes with ease, is soon contemned; long and eager pursuit endears any favour: or whether for the engaging of his disciples in so charitable a suit: or whether for the wise avoiding exception from the captious Jews: or, lastly, for the drawing on of an holy and imitable pattern of faithful perseverance; and to teach us not to measure God's hearing of our suit by his present answer, or his present answer by our own sense. While our weakness expects thy words, thy wisdom resolves upon thy silence: never wert thou better pleased to hear the acclamation of angels, than to hear this woman say, "O Lord, thou Son of David!" yet silence is thy answer. When we have made our prayers, it is an happy thing to hear the report of them back from heaven; but if we always do not so, it is not for us to be dejected, and to accuse either our infidelity or thy neglect; since we find here a faithful suitor met with a gracious Saviour, and yet "he answered her not a word." If we be poor in spirit, God is rich in mercy: he cannot send us away empty; yet he will not always let us feel his condescension, crossing us in our will, that he may increase our benefit.

It was no small fruit of Christ's silence that the disciples were hereupon moved to pray for her: not for a mere dismissal; it had been no favour to have required this, but a punishment; for, if to be held in suspense be miserable, to be sent away with a repulse is more; but for a merciful grant. They saw much passion in the woman, much cause of passion; they saw great discouragement on Christ's part, great constancy on hers. Upon all these, they feel her misery, and become suitors for her, unrequested. It is our duty, in case of necessity, to intercede for each other; and by how much more familiar we are with Christ, so much more should we improve our assiduities for the relief of the distressed; we are bid to say, "Our Father," not mine: yea, being members of one body, we pray for ourselves in others; if the foot be pricked, the back bends, the head bows down, the eyes stare, the hands stir, the tongue calls for aid; the whole man is in pain, and labours for redress; he cannot pray, or be heard for himself, who is no man's friend but his own; no prayer, without faith; no faith, without charity; no charity, without mutual intercession.

That which urged them to speak for her, is urged to Christ by them for her obtaining; "She cries after us." Prayer is an arrow; if it be drawn up but a little, it goes not far; but, if it be pulled up to the head, flies strongly, and pierces deep: if it be but dribbled forth of careless lips, it falls down at our foot; the strength of our ejaculation sends it up to heaven, and fetches down a blessing. The child hath escaped many a stripe by his loud crying; and the very unjust judge cannot endure the widow's clamour. Heartless motions do but teach us to deny; fervent suits offer violence both to earth and heaven.

Christ would not answer the woman, but answer the disciples. They who have a familiarity with God, shall receive answers, when strangers shall stand out; yea, even respecting domestics, some are more favoured: he that lay in Jesus's bosom, could receive that intelligence which was concealed from the rest; but who can tell whether that silence or this answer be more grievous? "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." What is this answer but a defence of that silence, and seeming neglect? While he said nothing, his forbearance might have been supposed to proceed from the necessity of some greater thoughts; but now his answer evinces that silence to have proceeded from a willing resolution not to answer: and therefore he does not vouchsafe so much as to give her the

answer, but gives it to her solicitors: that they who had undertaken to present her suit to him, might return his denial from him to her: "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Like a faithful embassador, Christ hath an eye to his commission; that may not be violated, though to an apparent advantage: whither he is not sent, he may not go. As he, so all his have their fixed marks set: at these they aim, and think it not safe to shoot at rovers. In matters of morality, it is not for us to stand only upon prohibitions, avoiding what is forbidden, but upon commands, endeavouring only what is enjoined; we need no other rule of our life, than the intention of our several stations; and if he that was God, would take no further scope to himself than the limits of his commission, how much doth it concern us frail men to keep within compass! or what shall become of our lawlessness, if we live in a direct contrariety to the will of him that sent us?

Israel was Jacob's name; and from him derived to his posterity: till the division of the tribes under Jeroboam, all that nation was Israel; then, the father's name went to the most (which were ten tribes), the name of the son Judas to the best, which were two. Christ takes no notice of this unhappy division; he remembers the ancient name which he gave to that faithful wrestler: it was this Christ with whom Jacob strove; it was he that sprained his hip, and changed his name, and dismissed him with a blessing; and now he cannot forget his mercy to the house of Israel: to that only doth he profess himself sent: their first brood were shepherds, now they are sheep; and those not guarded, not empastured, but strayed and lost. O Saviour, we see thy charge; the house of Israel, not of Esau; sheep, not goats, not wolves; lost sheep; not securely impaled in the confidence of their safe condition. Woe be to us, if thou wert not sent to us: he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; every Israelite is not a true one; we are not of thy fold, if we be not sheep; thou wilt not bring us back to thy fold, if we be not lost in our own apprehensions. O Lord, thou hast put a fleece upon our backs, we have lost ourselves enough: make us so sensible of our own wanderings, that we may find thee sent unto us, and may be happily found of thee.

Hath not this poor woman yet done? Can neither the silence of Christ, nor his denial silence her? Is it possible she should have any glimpse of hope, after such resolute repulses? Yet still, as if she saw no argument of discouragement, she comes, and worships, and cries, "Lord, help me." She who could not in the house get a word from Christ, she that saw her solicitors (though Christ's own disciples) repelled, nevertheless comes. Before, she followed; now, she overtakes him; before, she sued afar off; now, she comes close to him; no contempt can cast her off. Faith is an undaunting grace; it hath a strong heart, and a bold forehead; even very denials cannot dismay it, much less delays. She came not to face, not to expostulate, but to prostrate herself at his feet: her tongue worshipped him before, now her knee: the eye of her faith saw that dignity in Christ which bowed her to his earth; there cannot be a fitter gesture for man to God, than adoration.

Her first suit was for mercy, now for help. There is no use of mercy but in helpfulness; to be pitied without aid, is but an addition to misery: who can blame us, if we care not for an unprofitable compassion?

The very suit was gracious; she says not, Lord, if thou canst help me, as the father of the lunatic; but professes the power, while she begs the act; and gives glory, where she would have relief.

Who can expect other than a fair and yielding answer, to so humble, so faithful, so patient a suppliant? What can speed well, if a prayer of faith, from the knees of humility, succeed not? And yet, behold, the further she goes, the worse she fares; her discouragement is doubled with her suit: "It is not good, to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs." First, his silence implied a contempt; then, his answer defended his silence; now, his speech expresses and defends his contempt. Lo, he hath changed her from a woman to a dog, and, as it were, spurns her from his feet with an harsh repulse. What shall we say? Is the Lamb of God turned lion? Does that clear fountain of mercy run blood? O Saviour, did ever so hard a word fall from those mild lips?

lips? Thou calledst Herod fox; and most worthily, for he was crafty and wicked; the Scribes and Pharisees, a generation of vipers, because they were venomous and cruel; Judas a devil, since he was both covetous and treacherous: but, here was a woman in distress, and distress challenges mercy; a good woman, a faithful suppliant, a Canaanitish disciple, a Christian Canaanite, yet, as it were, whipped out for a dog, by thee, who wert all goodness and mercy! How different are thy ways from ours! Even thy severity argues favour; the trial had not been so sharp, if thou hadst not found the faith so strong, if thou hadst not meant the issue so happy. Thou hadst not driven her away, as a dog, if thou hadst not intended to admit her for a saint; and to advance her so much for a pattern of faith, as thou didst depress her for a spectacle of contempt.

The time was, when the Jews were children, and the Gentiles dogs; now the case is happily altered. The Jews are the dogs (so their dear and divine countryman calls the Concision): we Gentiles are the children: what certainty is there in an external profession, that gives us only to seem, not to be! at least, the being that it gives is doubtful and temporary; we may be children to-day, and dogs to-morrow. The true assurance of our condition is, in the decree and covenant of God, on his part; in faith and obedience (truly and graciously given), on ours. How they of children became dogs, it is not hard to say; their presumption, their unbelief transformed them; and (to perfect their brutishness) they set their fangs upon the Lord of life: why we of dogs become children, I know no reason: but, "O the depth!" That which at the first singled them out from the nations of the world, hath at last singled us out from the world and them: "It is not in him that willeth, nor him that runneth, but in God, that sheweth mercy." Lord, how should we bless thy goodness, that we of dogs are children! How should we fear thy justice, since they of children are dogs! Oh, let not us be high-minded, but tremble. If they were cut off, who crucified thee in thine humbled state; what must we expect, if we crucify thee daily in thy glory!

Now, what ordinary patience would not have been overstrained with so contemptuous and degrading a repulse! How few but would have fallen into intemperate passions, into passionate expostulations! "Art thou the Prophet of God, that so disdainfully entertainest poor suppliants? Is this the comfort that thou dealest to the distressed? Is this the fruit of my humble adoration, of my faithful profession? Did I snarl or bark at thee, when I called thee the Son of David? Did I fly upon thee otherwise than with my prayers and tears? And, if this term were fit for my vileness, yet doth it become thy lips? Is it not sorrow enough for me, that I am afflicted with my daughter's misery, but that thou (of whom I hoped for relief) must add to my affliction in an unkind reproach?" But here is none of all this; on the contrary, her humility grants all, her patience overcomes all, and she meekly answers, "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." The reply is not more pertinent than faithful. "O Lord, thou art truth itself; thy words can be no other than truth; thou hast called me a dog, and a dog I am; give me therefore the favour and privilege of a dog, that I may gather up some crumbs of mercy, from under that table whereat thy children sit: this blessing (though great to me), to the infiniteness of thy power and mercy, is but as a crum to a feast: I presume not to press to the board, but to creep under it; deny me not those small offals, which else would be swept away in the dust: after this stripe, give me but a crum, and I shall fawn upon thee, and depart satisfied." "Oh, woman (say I), great is thy humility, great is thy patience: but, "Oh woman (saith my Saviour), great is thy faith!" He sees the root, we the stock; nothing but faith could thus temper the heart, thus strengthen the soul, thus give a charm to the tongue. Oh, precious faith! Oh, acceptable perseverance! It is no marvel, if that chiding end in favour: "Be it to thee even as thou wilt!" Never did such grace go away uncrowned. The beneficence had been small, if thou hadst not carried away more than thou suedst for. Lo, thou who camest a dog, goest away a child; thou that wouldst but creep under the children's feet, art set at their elbow; thou that wouldst have taken up with a crum, art feasted with full dishes. The way

to speed well at God's hand, is to be humbled in his eyes, and in our own. It is quite otherwise with God, and with men; with men, we are so accounted of, as we account of ourselves; and he will be sure to be vile in the sight of others, who is vile in his own; but with God nothing is got by vain ostentation, nothing is lost by abasement. O God, when we look down to our own weakness, and cast up our eyes to thy infiniteness, thy omnipotence, what poor things we are! but when we look down upon our sins and wickedness, how shall we express our shame! None of all thy creatures, except devils, are capable of so foul a quality. As we have thus made ourselves worse than beasts, so let us, in a sincere abasement of mind, acknowledge it to thee, who canst pity, forgive, redress it; that thus setting ourselves down at the lower end of the table of thy creatures, thou, the great Master of the feast, mayst be pleased to advance us to the height of glory.

Leaving then the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, Christ came to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of Decapolis, (so called from ten chief cities which were in it.) Here they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech, beseeching him to lay his hand upon him. Christ takes him aside, and putting his fingers into his ears, and touching his tongue with a little spittle, and looking up to heaven (to testify that as Mediator he received this divine power of working miracles from his Father), and sighing and groaning in spirit (in token of the inward compassion and grief he was touched with, for the misery and affliction laid upon this man, and especially in contemplation of that corruption and sin that was in him, which was the cause and root of this misery), he says to him, "Ephphatha," and presently cures him.

Useful REFLECTIONS and REMARKS.

Our gracious Saviour, who is wont to exceed our desires, does more than they sue for; he not only touches the party, but takes him by the hand, and leads him from the multitude.

He that would be healed of his spiritual infirmities, must be sequestered from the throng of the world: there is a good use in the times of solitariness; a soul which is not sometimes retired, can never enjoy God; the modest Bridegroom of the church will not impart himself to his spouse before company; or perhaps this secession was for our example, to excite in us a willing and careful avoiding of any glory in our actions; whence also our Saviour gives an after-charge of secrecy. He that could say, "He that doth evil, hateth the light," escheweth the light even in doing good. To seek our own glory, is not glory; though, besides this bashful desire of obscurity, there should be a meet regard to opportunity in performing our actions. The envy of the scribes and pharisees might trouble the progress of our Lord's divine ministry; therefore, their exasperation is wisely declined by this retiring; he in whose hands time is, knows how to make his best choice of seasons. Neither was it our Saviour's meaning to have this miracle buried, but concealed; wisdom hath no better improvement than in distinguishing times, and discreetly marshalling the circumstances of our actions; which whosoever neglects will be sure to shame his work, and destroy his hopes.

Is there a spiritual patient to be cured? Aside with him: to undertake him before the face of the multitude, is to wound, not to heal him. Reproof and good counsel must be like our alms, in secret, so as (if possible) one ear or hand might not be conscious to the other; as in some cases respecting confession, so our reprehension must be auricular. The discreet surgeon, who would cure a modest patient, whose secret complaint hath in it more shame than pain, shuts out all eyes but his own. It is enough for the God of justice to say, "Thou didst it secretly, but I will do it before all Israel, and before this sun." Our limited and imperfect wisdom must teach us to apply private redresses to private maladies. It is the best remedy that is least seen, and most felt.

What

What means this variety of ceremony? O Saviour, how many parts of thee are here active? Thy finger is put into the ear, thy spittle touches the tongue, thy eyes look up, thy lungs sigh, thy lips move to an Ephphatha. Thy word alone, thy beck alone, thy wish alone, yea, the least act of velleity from thee, might have wrought this cure. Why wouldst thou employ so much of thyself in this work? was it to shew thy liberty in not always equally exercising the power of thy divinity? in that at one time thy sole command shall raise the dead, and eject devils; at another, thou wouldst accommodate thyself to the mean and homely fashions of natural agents, and, condescending to our senses and customs, take those ways which may carry some nearer reference to the cure intended? Or was it to teach us how well thou likest that there should be a ceremonious carriage of thy solemn actions: which thou pleasest to produce, cloathed with such circumstantial forms.

It did not content thee to put one finger into one ear; but into either ear wouldst thou put a finger: as both ears equally needed cure, thou didst apply the means of cure to both. The Spirit of God is the finger of God; then dost thou, O Saviour, put thy finger into our ear, when thy Spirit enables us to hear effectually. If we thrust our own fingers into our ears, using such human persuasions to ourselves as arise from worldly grounds, we labour in vain; yea, these stops must needs hinder our hearing the voice of God; hence, the great philosophers of the ancient world, the learned rabbies of the synagogue, the great doctors of a false faith, are deaf to spiritual things: it is only that finger of thy Spirit, O blessed Jesu, that can open our ears, and make a passage through our ears into our hearts: let that finger of thine be put into our ears, so shall our deafness be removed, and we shall hear not the loud thunders of the law, but the gentle whispers of thy gracious motions to our souls.

We hear for ourselves, but we speak for others. Our Saviour was not content to open the ears only, but to untie the tongue; with the ear we hear, with the mouth we confess. The same hand is applied to the tongue, not with a dry touch, but with spittle; in allusion, doubtless, to the removal of the natural impediment of speech: moisture, we know, makes the tongue slippery, and fit for motion; how much more from that sacred mouth!

Some have their ears open, but their mouths shut to God; they understand, but do not utter the wonderful works of God; there is but half a cure wrought upon these men; their ear is only open to hear their own judgment; except their mouth be open to confess their Maker and Redeemer. O God, do thou so moisten my tongue with thy graces, that it may run smoothly (as the pen of a ready writer) to the praise of thy name. While the finger of our Saviour was on the tongue, and in the ear of the patient, his eye was in heaven: never man had so much cause to look up to heaven as he; there was his home; there was his throne: he only was from heaven, heavenly; each of us may have a good mind homeward, though we meet with more captivating sights abroad: how much more glorious should our heavenly home be than the region of our peregrination! But thou, O Saviour, hadst not only thy dwelling there, but thy seat of majesty; there the greatest angels adored thee; it is then a wonder that thine eye could be ever any where but there. What doth thine eye in this, but teach ours where to be fixed? Every good and every perfect gift comes down from above. How can we look off from that place whence we receive all good? Thou didst not teach us to say, O infinite God, who art every where! but, O our Father, who art in heaven! There let us look up to thee: O let not our eyes or hearts grovel upon this earth; but let us fasten them above the hills whence cometh our salvation: thence let us acknowledge all the good we receive; thence let us expect all the good we want.

Why our Saviour looked up to heaven (though he had heaven in himself), we can see reason enough: but why did he sigh? surely not for need; the least motion of a thought was in him impetratory; how could he choose but be heard of his Father, who was one with the Father? Not for any fear of distrust; but, partly for compassion, partly for example; for compassion of those manifold infirmities, into which sin had plunged mankind; a pitiful instance whereof was here presented to him; for example, to fetch sighs

from us for the miseries of others; sighs of sorrow for them; sighs of desire for their recovery: this is not the first time that our Saviour spent sighs, yea tears, upon human distresses; we are not bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, if we so feel not the smart of our brethren, as to cause the fire of our passion to break forth into the smoak of sighs, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?"

Christ was not silent while he cured the dumb; his Ephphatha gave life to all his other actions; his sighing, his spitting, his looking up to heaven, were the acts of a man; but his command of the ear and mouth to open, was the act of God: he could not command that which he made not: his word is imperative, ours supplicatory: he doth what he will with us, we do by him what he thinks good to impart. In this mouth the word cannot be severed from the success; our Saviour's lips are no sooner opened in his Ephphatha, than the mouth of the dumb and the ears of the deaf are opened. At once, behold here celerity and perfection: natural agents work by leisure, by degrees; nothing is done in an instant; by many steps is every thing carried on; from the beginning to the consummation. Omnipotence knows no rules; no imperfect work can proceed from a cause absolutely perfect: the man hears now more distinctly than if he had never been deaf; and speaks more plainly, than if he had never been tongue-tied. And can we blame him if he bestowed the first-fruits of his speech upon the Power that restored it? or if the first improvement of his tongue were the praise of the Giver, of the Maker of it? Can we indeed expect otherwise than that our Saviour should say, 'Thy tongue is free, use it to the praise of him that made it so; thy ears are open, hear him that bids thee proclaim thy cure upon the house-top?' But now, behold, on the contrary, he that opens this man's mouth by his powerful word, by the same word shuts it again; charging silence by the same breath wherewith he gave speech, "Tell no man."

Those tongues which interceded for his cure, are, as it were, charmed for the concealment of it. O Saviour, thou knowest the grounds of thine own commands; it is not for us to inquire, but to obey; we must not attempt to honour thee with a forbidden celebration. Good meanings have often proved injurious. Those men whose charity employed their tongues to speak for the dumb man, now employ the same tongues to speak of his cure, when they should have been dumb: this charge (they imagine) proceeds from an humble modesty in Christ; which the respect to his honour induces them to violate. We strangely itch after those forbidden acts which, if left to our liberty, we willingly neglect; this prohibition increases the rumour; every tongue is busied about this one: what can we make of this but a well-meant disobedience? O God, I should more gladly publish thy name at thy command: I know thou canst not bid me to dishonour thee; there is no danger of such an injunction; but if thou shouldst bid me hide the profession of thy name, and wondrous works, I should fulfill thy words, and not examine thine intentions: thou knowest how to win more honour by our silence, than by our promulgation. A forbidden good differs little from evil. What makes our actions to be sin, but thy prohibitions? Our judgment avails nothing; if thou forbid us that which we think good, the doing it becomes as faulty in thy account as that which is originally evil. Take thou charge of thy glory, and give me grace to pay due regard to thy precepts.

Jesus now goes up into a mountain, and thither they bring to him many lame, blind, dumb, and persons otherwise distressed, laying them before him, and casting them down at his feet; all of whom he cures, to the astonishment of all. The people, upon the sight of these miracles wrought by him, glorified the God of Israel; shewing therein how much better they were than the high-crested pharisees, who miraculously attributed his miracles to the devil.

About the same time a great multitude having remained three days with him in the desert, and having carried very little provision of food or victuals with them, and during that time having, for the most part, it seems, continued fasting, he expresses his tender compassion towards them, in regard of their present necessity, and want of food; and his unwillingness to send them away thus fasting, lest they should faint by the way. His disciples representing unto him the impossibility of providing for such a vast multitude in the wilderness; he asks them what provisions they had, and they answering, Only seven loaves,

loaves, and a few little fishes, he commands that the multitude should sit down; and with those few loaves and fishes, he feeds four thousand men, besides women and children, and there remained seven baskets full of fragments.

In his former miracle of the loaves, he fed a greater number, viz. five thousand men, women and children, with a smaller quantity of food, viz. five loaves, and two fishes, and a greater quantity of fragments was left, viz. twelve baskets full. Whereas here was a greater quantity of food, viz. seven loaves, and a few fishes, to feed a lesser number of persons, viz. four thousand, and yet a less quantity of fragments was left, viz. seven baskets full. By this our Saviour shewed the absolute freedom of his divine power, that he was not tied to any means; and that he could have fed them, though they had had no provision before prepared, if it had so pleased him.

Having thus miraculously fed the people, and sent them away, he straightway entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the coasts of Magdala, or Dalmanutha (the place, it seems, having both those names). There the Pharisees, and some Sadducees (though in other things differing from them, yet in this joining with them), came to him, and questioned with him about his person, whether he were the Messiah or no? also about his calling and authority to preach such doctrine, and do such miracles as he did; and demanded of him some sign or miracle from heaven, that is, which should happen in, out of, or from heaven, and in which the divine power of God might be immediately manifested; that is, some such miracle as the Lord wrought in the times of the Old Testament, when he rained manna, or sent down fire from Heaven, or, at the command of Joshua, made the sun and moon stand still: by which they might be induced to believe that God had sent him. Our Saviour, being deeply grieved at their gross hypocrisy, horrible hardness of heart, and obstinate persisting in their unbelief, notwithstanding all the miracles he had hitherto wrought among them, and that the people should have such blind guides; and upbraiding them, that they could foretell what weather it would be by the appearance of the heavens, yet could not discern the condition of this time, in which had happened so many signs of the presence of the Messiah among them, according to the predictions of the prophets; and the miracles he himself had wrought, being evident and undeniable proofs thereof; he refuses to give them any such sign or miracle as they desired to see: and though he wrought many miracles after for the benefit of such as were like to make a good use of them, yet as for these Pharisees and Sadducees, he refers them, for their conviction, to that which was prefigured by the rising of Jonas out of the whale's belly (intimating thereby his own resurrection from the dead, after they had crucified him); and if that would not convince them, that he was the true Messiah, they should have no other means of conviction afforded them. And possibly, by putting them in mind of Jonas's preaching at Nineveh, and the speedy repentance of the Ninevites thereupon, he intended to suggest to them, that if they did not speedily repent, upon his preaching, and working miracles among them, they should suddenly be destroyed.

Thus leaving these Pharisees, being justly offended at the hardness of their hearts, Jesus enters again into a ship, and passes with his disciples from the coasts of Dalmanutha, to the other side of the sea of Galilee. When they came thither, his disciples find that they had forgotten to take bread, having but one loaf with them in the ship; Jesus takes occasion from hence, to bid them beware of the leaven, that is, the corrupt and unsound doctrine and opinions of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians. The disciples understood him literally, as if his purpose were to warn them, that in this their present necessity, and want of bread, they should not seek to the Pharisees, or Sadducees, or Herodians for bread, nor eat bread at their tables, whatever their need should be, forasmuch as they were his professed enemies. Our Saviour hereupon sharply reproves them for their stupidity, earthly-mindedness, and thoughtfulness about worldly provisions; as if he could not feed them, except they brought bread with them, but must be beholden to the Pharisees for it, especially having seen his two late miracles of feeding so many with so little provision. At last they came to understand that he spake not of the leaven of bread, but of corrupt doctrine, being used to teach spiritual things by similitudes taken from earthly matters.

Going from thence with his disciples into the coasts of Cæsarea-Philippi, he asks them what opinion and persuasion the common people had of his person. They answer, that some said, he was John the Baptist; some, that he was Elias; others, Jeremiah; and others, that he was one of the Old Prophets risen again, Luke ix. 19.

Arguments against the pretended Succession and Infallibility of the Pope.

Upon our Saviour's asking his apostles, whom they took him to be, Peter replied, "Thou art Christ, the son of the living God." Jesus answered and said unto him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven; and I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."

From the promissory part of this answer of Christ, the Romanists pretend to prove, both that their Pope is the true successor of St. Peter, and that he is infallible in all his determinations: for this reason, we shall here consider the promissory part of this answer, and shew not only that no such consequences can justly be drawn from it, but also what is the true and full sense thereof.

First, then, we acknowledge, that our Lord, when he said, "Upon this rock will I build my church," did not speak in general to all his apostles, but to Peter in particular.

But we are also to remember, in the second place, that the pretences of the Pope to be St. Peter's successor are so far from being established by this application, that they are thereby most effectually overthrown. And this will be as evident as the former proposition, when we have sufficiently considered our Lord's promise to build his church upon Peter, and how that promise was fulfilled.

1. Our Lord speaks here of his church, not as a thing in present being, or a building now erected, but as hereafter to be raised: "I will hereafter build my church, that is the christian church, commencing after my resurrection and ascension." This is the church of which our Lord here plainly speaks in this text, and which was hereafter to be founded by St. Peter's preaching to both Jew and Gentile. If then the Pope would be St. Peter's successor in this affair, he must in person go to the unbelieving Jews and heathen world, as Peter did, and labour by his preaching to convert the Turk, the Jew, and the infidel: but while he remains at Rome, lording it over God's heritage, without keeping up the character, and following the practice of that eminent apostle, all pretensions to his being that apostle's successor are absolutely vain and trivial.

2. The sense of our Saviour's promise will farther appear, if we consider the manner in which it was fulfilled. Our Lord used the ministry of St. Peter in laying the first foundations of a church, both among the Jews and Gentiles. He was the first preacher of, and made the first proselytes to, that faith which he here confessed to Christ. It was in consequence of this promise that Peter laid the foundation of a church among the Jews, by the conversion of three thousand souls, who, when they had gladly embraced his doctrine, were all baptized; and then we find the first mention of a christian church, in these words; "And the Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved." The same apostle laid the first foundation of a church among the Gentiles, by the conversion of Cornelius and his friends: for though we read before of persons in Samaria, that were converted and baptized by Philip the evangelist (he being one of them that were dispersed through Judea and Samaria upon the persecution that arose concerning Stephen); yet the Holy Ghost informs us, that they who were thus scattered preached the Word to none but the Jews only. Nor could they, conformably to their avowed principles, do otherwise, since they deemed it unlawful to go into, or converse with the uncircumcised; and had no apprehension that God would grant repentance unto life to the Gentiles: wherefore, to qualify Peter for this work, the Lord, by a vision, convinced him of the

the lawfulness of preaching the glad tidings of salvation to the heathen world, and of conversing with them for that end.

In pursuance of this promise made to Peter, God commands Cornelius to send, not to Jerusalem for James and John, nor to Damascus for Paul, but to Joppa for Peter, whom Christ had by his promise appointed for that work, that from him he might hear those words, by which he and his whole household should be saved. And it seems to be in relation to this promise of our Lord, as well as the completion of it by the conversion of Cornelius, that Peter spoke thus in the synod met at Jerusalem: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose me out from among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word." Certainly therefore he was the person who first preached the gospel to the Gentiles; and, by so doing, opened the kingdom of heaven to them: he was the person chosen by Christ to perform this work, from the beginning of Christ's own preaching, when he received the name of Cephas with relation thereto.

Conclude we therefore, that the apostle Peter, by preaching first to both Jew and Gentile, and by baptizing those to whom he preached, was to lay the first foundations of the christian church; and that against the church, thus planted by him, the gates of hell should not prevail: for no other sense of our Saviour's words can be justified, from what afterwards happened to that apostle; whereas this interpretation is clearly to be made out from the event of things, as they are at large related in the Acts of the apostles. And this being so, it clearly follows, that St. Peter neither hath nor can have a successor in the prerogative here given him by Christ; and consequently that it is most absurd to claim a title of succession to that prerogative; this being in effect to say, that the foundations of the church of Christ are not yet laid; and to pretend a commission to perform that at present, which was fully performed above seventeen hundred years ago, and which in the nature of the thing could never be performed more than once, or by more than one individual person.

Having thus overthrown the pretence of succession, as taken from our Lord's promise that he would build his church upon St. Peter; the next thing to be considered, are the words immediately following, which are as it were an additional promise to the other: "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Here the principal inquiry will be, What is to be understood by "the gates of hell?" for this phrase is variously interpreted by different authors.

Without dwelling on this variety of opinions, it is sufficient to take notice here, that some understand by this phrase the prevalence of heresy and schism; others, the growth of wickedness and vice; others again, the subtlety of Satan, and the power of his temptations and assaults. But if we imagine the import of it, as used by the antient Greek and Jewish writers, in the Old Testament, and in the translation of the seventy interpreters, we shall find that it is never used to signify either of these, and therefore cannot rationally be supposed to bear any such sense, but is constantly put by them for the state of death, the place or receptacle of the dead, into which souls departed enter, or for the entrance into that place. We shall here mention only two or three texts of scripture, where the same original word Hades, which our translators have rendered Hell, may be found in this sense; leaving the proofs from other authors to be consulted in the writings of those who have collected them. The texts are as follow: The writing of Hezekiah, after his recovery, begins thus: "I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more, with the inhabitants of the world." And thus God puts the question to Job, "Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?" In like manner speaks the author of the book of Wisdom; "Thou hast the power of life and death; thou bringest down to the gates of the grave, and thou raisest up again." In all these places, the original word is the same which the Evangelist here makes use of.

From this account of the word Hades, in our translation rendered Hell, we may collect the true meaning of our Saviour's promise, that "the gates of hell should not prevail

against his church," namely, that "death itself shall not prevail against the genuine members of Christ's church, but that they shall enjoy a glorious resurrection." And from this exposition we may learn, how vainly these words are produced to prove, that any church upon earth is infallible, and particularly that the church of Rome hath a title to that privilege: for if the "gates of hell" never signifies, in any ancient writer, or in any eastern language, heresy or error; to interpret these words of a security from error promised to the church, must be to wrest them from their plain and constant sense, to such an import as they never had in any language that was in use when our Saviour spoke them.

Only the last part of our Saviour's promise to Peter now remains to be considered: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven."

Now St. Peter had the keys of the kingdom of heaven, by being the first that opened that kingdom by preaching to both Jew and Gentile, and baptizing those that believed, and thereby laying the foundation of a church among them. Our Lord's giving Peter this key, therefore, was equivalent to making him the rock on which he would build his church, and both promises are to be understood as relating to the same thing. That this privilege of the keys extended no farther than to the first opening of the kingdom of heaven, that is, to the erecting of the first churches, is evident from this, that the other apostles had not these keys: whereas, might it be extended to all the churches that were afterwards erected, St. James, St. John, and St. Paul, would have had the keys as much as St. Peter. For James and John executed the ministerial office, and erected churches among the Jews, independently of Peter: and Paul was, by way of excellency, and by virtue of his mission, the apostle of the Gentiles, and opened the kingdom of heaven to more of them than Peter ever did.

Hitherto, then, the promise given to Peter relates only to his being made the first publisher of the gospel, the first means of converting men to the knowledge of the truth: and this was indeed the whole privilege granted him by consequence of that promise, nor are we to think that this was a small one neither. As to what follows, concerning the power of binding and loosing on earth and in heaven, it was no peculiar grant to Peter, but common to all the apostles; Christ having said the same thing to them all in general, as fully as he did here to St. Peter: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." This power of binding and loosing, therefore, let it have been what it will, must have given Peter no superiority over his brethren, forasmuch as they had the same power in an equal degree with him.

The better to come at a true notion of this power, it is proper to inquire into the sense of the original words by which it is expressed. Now the Greek word which we render "to loose" has in scripture a relation to sin, and the pardon of it. Thus we read of Job, that "he prayed for his three friends, and God accepted the face of Job, and forgave," or loosed, "their sin." And the author of Ecclesiasticus says, "Forgive the injury of thy brother; and so when thou prayest, thy sin shall be forgiven, or loosed." And this being the sense of the word "loose," its opposite "bind," by the rule of contraries, must signify to retain their sins; to leave them under the guilt, and obnoxious to the punishment of them.

Having thus found out the general import of these words, the sense of them, as they express a power lodged in the apostles, becomes pretty obvious. Our Saviour, when he spoke this to his apostles, had just before been laying down rules for reproofing and correcting a brother who had offended: to which he added this, as a farther privilege of the twelve, than that of barely reproofing or rejecting an obstinate offender. As if he had said, "You shall not only, in these cases, have power, as Christians, to loose your repenting, and bind your obstinately-offending brother; but, as you are my apostles, to whom I have promised the Spirit of truth, I grant you farther, that whatsoever things ye shall declare to be forbidden on pain of my displeasure, shall, by your prohibition, be rendered obnoxious

obnoxious to my wrath; and whatsoever things ye shall declare to be lawful, though once forbidden by the law of Moses, men shall be allowed to do them, without incurring my displeasure." This promise to the apostles, in the sense here given of it, is the foundation of our obligation to believe and obey all their commands and doctrines: it makes their words of equal authority with those of Christ himself; and, indeed, in what they left for the guidance of the church, they were influenced and directed by the same spirit by whom Christ executed his prophetic office.

But then this promise, though given in so great a latitude to the apostles, can by no means be extended to their successors; nor even, if it could, would the allowing of such a thing be of any service to the bishop of Rome: for this power being given to all the apostles, as much as to him that was successor of St. Peter (whether the Pope be so, or no, is not now the matter in dispute, that pretence being already refuted); it belongs therefore to every priest, at least to every bishop, as much as to the Pope; so that if infallibility be lodged in any one person, it is lodged in a great many, and not in the Pope alone: nor can it be in any council more than in a single successor of the apostles, any otherwise than as a large body of men may give a sanction to their decrees, and make them appear with more solemnity.

Moreover, having now confirmed his apostles in the belief of his person as the true Messiah, he foretells and gives them warning beforehand of his death and sufferings. 1. That they might not think it strange to see him, whom they had confessed to be the Christ, the Son of God, to be reproached and despitefully used, and at last to be put to death by wicked men. 2. That they might be the better prepared for that great trial and affliction which would happen to them on account thereof. 3. That he might undeceive them, and rectify an erroneous conceit, which they and other Jews also had, that the Messiah's kingdom should be an earthly one, accompanied with outward glory and prosperity in this world, as may appear from Matth. xx. 21, and Acts i. 6.

And having told them of his passion, he foretells also his resurrection, lest, if they should have heard only of the former, they might have begun to doubt of the truth of his Godhead, which they had before confessed: therefore, to strengthen their faith, he tells them, that though he should die and suffer, yet, by the power of his Godhead, he should rise again within three days. Having thus plainly expressed himself concerning his sufferings and passion, Peter (who it seems did not yet fully understand these things) takes him aside, and began to blame and find fault with him for affirming that he must die and undergo such great sufferings, and said to him, "Be it far from thee, Lord: This shall not be unto thee." Christ hereupon severely and sharply reproves him, calling him Satan, for taking upon him to blame him whom he had but newly confessed to be the Son of God, whence he should have concluded he could not err, or be faulty in speaking or doing any thing; as also, for going about to dissuade him from dying and suffering, which was a proposal fit only for the adversary of God and man to make unto him, and which (if it should be embraced by him) would hinder the work of man's redemption.

And seeing Peter was so loth to hear of his Master's death or suffering (his heart possibly too much running upon, and expecting that the Messiah should have a temporal kingdom, with which such sufferings were not consistent), our Saviour tells him, and his fellow-apostles, and all the people there present, that it was not only needful for him, their Lord and Master, to think of suffering, but for them also, and for all that will be his true disciples, to prepare for them: and accordingly requires this as a duty of all that will be his followers, that they deny themselves, and take up their cross, and willingly submit themselves to the bearing of all such afflictions as they shall meet with in his service: yea, and patiently to suffer death itself for his sake, whensoever they shall be called thereunto. And this he presseth by two forcible reasons, Mark viii. 35. First, from the great damage and danger that will accrue to such as refuse to lay down their lives for his sake, and desire and seek to save them, though it be with the denial and forsaking him and his gospel; such shall lose their lives, which they think to save. Secondly, from the reward and benefit promised to such as are willing to lay down their lives for him, when they are called to it: such shall save their lives. The former shall
lose

lose not only their temporal life, but (except they repent) the eternal happiness of soul and body; the other shall not only recover their bodily life at the resurrection, but shall also receive the reward of eternal life, and both soul and body shall be for ever happy in the kingdom of heaven. And he leaves them to consider what a foolish bargain that man will make for himself who, to preserve his life, or any temporal interest, shall betray his soul and body to eternal misery! And he further declares, that such as will not confess him, nor his gospel, when they are called to it, but are ashamed so to do, that he himself will be ashamed of such, and will not own them, when he shall come in the same glory and divine majesty which is originally and primarily in God the Father, attended with the holy angels as his ministers and servants, to judge the world, and to reward every man according to his works. And having mentioned this his second glorious coming, the more to strengthen his disciples' faith touching the truth and certainty of it, and to prevent any offence which might arise by the delay of the time thereof, he tells them, that some of them there present should, before they die, see a special type and resemblance thereof, in his coming with power to execute judgments and vengeance upon his enemies the obstinate Jews, in the destruction of Jerusalem, and overthrow of that nation, of which he afterwards speaks more expressly in Matth. xxiv. and Luke xxi.

About eight days after Jesus had spoken these words (six days completely elapsing between), taking Peter, James, and John along with him (who were the chief and most eminent for gifts and authority among his apostles, intending they should first be spectators of his glory, whom afterwards he purposed to make witnesses of his bitter agony, Matt. xxvi. 37.) into an "high mountain," and there praying with them; while he prayed, he was transfigured before them, his face shining as bright as the sun, and his garments becoming as white as the light, or snow; and Moses and Elias, those two eminent prophets of the Old Testament, appeared (and probably in the same manner, and with the like glory) talking with him, and discoursing about his death and crucifixion, which he was to suffer at Jerusalem. So that besides his own testimony, foretelling his sufferings, as we mentioned before, here is another of Moses and Elias, brought down from heaven, to testify the same beforehand, that his disciples might not be offended to see him whom they acknowledged for the Son of God, and Saviour of others, to be himself subject to death. Peter was so ravished and affected with the sweetness of this company, and the sight of this heavenly glory, in which Christ, Moses, and Elias appeared, that all his desire was, to stay and continue there in the Mount, and to build tabernacles for themselves, and not to consort any more with poor mortals beneath; not apprehending how contrary this was to what Christ was to do for our redemption, namely, to die at Jerusalem; nor considering that Christ, Moses, and Elias, remaining in such heavenly glory as now they appeared in, could stand in no need of earthly tabernacles. While Peter spake thus inconsiderately, an extraordinary and miraculous bright shining cloud was sent, and appeared over Christ, and those that were with him in the Mount, and a voice was uttered from heaven, from the excellent glory (2 Pet. i. 17.), saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him." When the disciples heard that voice from heaven, they fell prostrate on their faces, and were exceedingly afraid; but Jesus touching them, bade them arise. Then lifting up their eyes, they perceived Moses and Elias to be taken away, and that Jesus was left alone with them, having put off his glory, and resumed his former shape. And when they came down from the Mount, he charged them that they should not publish, or make commonly known, these glorious things they had seen, till after his resurrection; since the publishing of his divine glory at that time might have proved a means to hinder the execution of God's counsel and purpose touching his death, and the work of our redemption.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS.

There is not in all divinity an higher manifestation of divine glory, than this of Christ transfigured: suffer me therefore to lead you up, by the hand, into Mount Tabor; for nearer to heaven ye cannot come, while you are upon earth; the region of his shame and abasement, who is now glorious in heaven, the throne of his Majesty. He that would not have his transfiguration spoken of till he were raised, would have it spoken of all the world over, now that he is raised and ascended, that by this momentary glory we may judge of the eternal. The circumstances shall be to us as the skirts of the hill, which we will climb up lightly; describing the time, place, attendants, company. The time, after six days; the place, an high hill apart; the attendants, Peter, James, John; the company, Moses and Elias: which when we have passed through, on the top of the hill shall appear to us that sight which shall once make us glorious, and in the mean time happy.

All three evangelists agree in the precise time of this event; namely, that it was immediately after those words, "There be some of them that stand here, who shall not taste of death, till they have seen the Son of Man come in his kingdom; wherein the act appears to be a comment upon the words. Peter, James, and John, were these some: they tasted not of death, till they saw this heavenly image of the royalty of Christ glorified. But the term of its commencement disagrees a little: Matthew and Mark say, "after six;" Luke, "about eight;" which, as they are easily reconciled by the usual distinction of inclusive and exclusive, necessary for all computations; and Luke's "about eight," seems to intimate God's seventh day, the Sabbath; else why should there be such precise mention of six days after, and about eight, but to imply that day which was betwixt the sixth and eighth? God's day was fittest for so divine a work, and well might that day which denoted God's rest, and man's glory, be used for the clear representation of the rest and glory of God and man: but in this conjecture, I dare not be too positive. It was certainly the seventh, whether it were that seventh, the seventh after the promise of the glory of his kingdom exhibited: and this perhaps not without a mystery. God teacheth, both by words and acts, saith Hilary, that after six ages of the world, should be Christ's glorious appearance, and our transfiguration with him; but I know what our Saviour's farewell was, "It is not for us to know;" but if we may not know, we may conjecture; yet not above that we ought, saith St. Paul, we may not *super sapere* (affect to be wise above that which is written), as Tertullian's phrase is.

For the place, tradition hath taken it still for Tabor. This I would not contradict without sufficient warrant: it was, however, an high hill; thirty furlongs high, saith Josephus; *mira rotunditate sublimis*, of an astonishing height and circumference, saith Jerom; and so steep, that some of our English travellers, that have desired to climb it of late, have been glad to give it up when in the middle, and to measure the rest with their eyes; doubtless this hill was a symbol of heaven, being near it both in situation and resemblance. Heaven is expressed usually by the name of God's hill: and nature, or the appellation given it, taught the heathens to figure it by their Olympus. All divine affairs of high importance were done on hills: on the hill of Sinai was the law delivered; on the hill of Moriah was Isaac to be sacrificed, whence Abraham's motto is *in monte providebitur*, in the mount it shall be seen; on the hill of Rephidim stood Moses, with the rod of God in his stretched hand, and typified him crucified upon the hill whom Joshua typified victorious in the valley; on the hills of Ebal and Gerizim, were the blessings and curses; on Carmel was Elijah's sacrifice; the phrontisteria, schools or universities of the prophets, were also Ramath and Gibeah, *excelsa*, high places; and who knows not, that on the hill of Sion stood the Temple: "I have looked up to the hills," said the psalmist; and idolatry, in imitation, had their hill-altars: on the Mount of Olives, was Christ wont to send up his prayers, and sent up himself; and here Luke saith, he went up to an high hill, to pray; not because God makes difference

rence of places; to whose immensity heaven itself is a valley; for it was a heathenish conceit of those Assyrians, that God is *Deus montium*, the God of the mountains; but because we are commonly more disposed to good, by either the freedom of our prospect of heaven, or the awfulness or solitary silence of places, which (as one says) strikes a kind of adoration into us: or, by our local removal from this attractive body of the earth; however, when the body sees itself above the earth, the eye of the mind is more easily raised to her heaven. It is good to take all advantage of place (setting aside superstition) to further our devotion: Aaron and Hur were in the mountain with Moses, and held up his hands: Aaron (say some allegorists) is mountainous; Hur, fiery: heavenly meditation, and the fire of love, must lift up our prayers to God. As Satan carried up Christ to an high hill to tempt him, so he carries up himself, to be freed from temptation and destruction: if ever we would be transfigured in our dispositions, we must leave the earth below, and abandon all worldly thoughts; *Venite, ascendamus*, Oh, come, let us climb up to the hill, where God sees, or is seen, saith devout Bernard; "Oh, all ye cares, distractions, thoughtfulness, labours, pains, servitudes, detain me here with this ass, my body, till I with the boy, that is, my reason and understanding, shall worship and return;" saith the same father, wittily alluding to the journey of Abraham for his sacrifice.

Wherefore then did Christ climb up this high hill? Not to look about him, but, saith St. Luke, to pray; not for prospect, but for devotion; that his thoughts might climb up yet nearer to heaven. Behold, how Christ entered upon all his great works, with prayers in his mouth: when he was to enter into that great work of his humiliation in his passion, he went into the garden to pray; when he is to enter into this great work of his exaltation, in his transfiguring, he went up into the mountain to pray; he was taken up from his knees, to both: O noble example of piety and devotion to us! He was God that prayed; the God that he prayed to he might have commanded; yet he prayed, that we men might learn of him to pray to him; what should we men dare to do without prayers, when he that was God, would do nothing without them? The very heathen poet could say, *A Jove principium*; and which of those verse-mongers ever durst write a ballad, without the aid of some deity? which of the heathens durst attempt any great enterprize (*insalutato numine*) without invocation and sacrifice? Saul himself would play the priest, and offer a burnt offering to the Lord, rather than the Philistines should fight with him not having supplicated, as thinking any devotion better than none, and thinking it more safe to sacrifice without a priest, than to fight without prayers; "Ungirt, unblest," was the old proverb, meaning, not ready till they were girded, so not till they had prayed; and how dare we rush hastily into the affairs of God, or the state? how dare we thrust ourselves into actions, either perilous or important, without ever lifting up our eyes and hearts to the God of Heaven! except we would say (as the devilish malice of Surius flanders that zealous Luther), *Nec propter Deum hæc res capta est, nec propter Deum finiatur*," &c. "This business was neither begun for God, nor shall be ended for him." How can God bless us, if we address him not in prayer? how can we prosper, if he bless us not? how can we hope ever to be transformed from a lump of corrupt flesh, if we do not ascend and pray? as the Samaritan woman said weakly, and as we may say seriously,—The well of mercies is deep; if thou hast nothing to draw with, never expect to taste of the waters of life. I fear the worst of men, Turks; and the worst Turks, the Moors; shall rise up in judgment against many Christians: with those infidels it is a just exception, against any witness by their law, that he hath not prayed six times in each natural day. Before the day break, they pray for day; when it is day, they give God thanks for day; at noon, they thank God for half the day past; after that, they pray for a good sun-set; after that, they thank God for the day past; and lastly, pray for a good night after their day: and many called Christians, suffer so many suns and moons to rise and set upon their heads, and never lift up the hearts to their Creator and ours, either to ask his blessing, or to acknowledge his goodness! Of all men under heaven, none had so much need to pray as courtiers. That which was but once done to Christ, is always done to them: they

they are set upon the hill, and see the glory of the kingdoms of the earth; but I fear it may be said of them, as with some mariners, The more need, the less devotion. Ye have seen the place, see the attendants: he would not have many, because he would not have it yet known to all; hence was his strict charge, and sealing up their mouths with a *Nemini dicite*, "Tell no man." It was not to be concealed from every one, because he would not have it altogether unknown: and afterwards would have it known to all. Three was a legal number, *In ore duorum aut trium*, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses." Christ had eternally possessed the glory of his Father without any witnesses; in time, the angels were blessed with that sight; and after that, two bodily yet heavenly witnesses were allowed, Enoch and Elias: now in his humanity, when he was to be invested with glory, he takes but three witnesses; and those earthly and weak, Peter, James, John: and why these? Herein we may be too curious: Peter perhaps, because the eldest; John, because the dearest; James, because, next to Peter, the most zealous; or Peter, because he loved Christ most; John, because Christ most loved him; James, because, next to both, he loved, and was loved most; however, I had rather to have no reason but this, *quia complacuit*, because it so pleased him. Why may we not as well ask, why he chose these twelve from others, as why he chose these three out of the twelve? If any Romanists will derive from hence any privilege to Peter (which we would be well content to yield, if that would make them the honestest men), they must remember, that they must take company with them; which these Pompeian spirits cannot abide: as good no privilege as any partners; and withal, they must see him more taxed for his error, in this transaction, than honoured by his presence, at the act; whereas, the beloved disciple saw, and erred not. These same three, who were witnesses of his transfiguration in the Mount, were witnesses of his agony in the garden; all three, and these three alone, were present at both, but both times sleeping, these were *arictes gregis*, the bell-wethers of the flock, as Austin calls them: Oh weak devotion of three great disciples! these were St. Paul's three pillars, Gal. ii. 9. Christ takes them up twice, once to be witnesses of his greatest glory; the second time, of his greatest extremity; they sleep both times: the other was in the night, more tolerable; this by day, yea in a light above day. Chrysostom would fain denominate it an amazedness, not a sleep; not considering that they slept both at that glory, and after in the agony. To see that Master praying, one would have thought should have fetched them on their knees: especially to see such heavenly affections look out at his eyes; to see his soul lifted up in his hands, in that transported manner, to heaven. But after the hill had wearied their limbs, their body clogs their soul: and they fall asleep: while Christ saw divine visions, they dreamed dreams; while he was in another world, ravished with the sight of his Father's glory, yea with his own, they were in another world, a world of fancies, surprised with the kinsman of death, sleep; besides so gracious an example, their own necessity, *quia incessanter pecco*, because I continually sin, Bernard's reason might have moved them to pray, rather than their Master; and, behold, instead of fixing their eyes upon heaven, they shut them; instead of lifting up their hearts, their heads fall down upon their shoulders; and here was soon after snoring, instead of sighs and prayers; this was not Abraham's or Elihu's ecstatic sleep, Job xxxiii. not the sleep of the Church, a waking sleep: but the plain sleep of the eyes; and that not a slumbering sleep, which David denies to himself, Psal. xxxii. but a sound sleep, which Solomon forbids, Prov. vi. 4. yea rather the dead sleep of Adam, or Jonas, and, as Bernard used to say, when he heard a monk snore, they did *carnaliter seu seculariter dormire*, "sleep like worldlings or carnal people." Prayer is an ordinary receipt for sleep; how prone are we to it, when we should mind divine things! Adam slept in Paradise, and lost a rib; but this sleep was of God's giving, and this rib was of God's taking. The good husband slept, and found tares: Eutychus slept, and fell; while Satan lulls us to sleep (as he always rocks the cradle when we sleep at our devotion), he ever takes some good from us, or puts some evil in us, or exposes to a deadly fall. Away with this spiritual lethargy; Bernard observes, that they who sleep, are dead to men; they who are dead, are asleep to God; but I say, they

they who sleep at church, are dead to God, so we preach their funeral sermons instead of admonishing them; and as he was wont to say, he lost no time so much as that wherein he slept; so let me add, there is no loss of time so desperate, as of holy time. Think, that Christ saith to thee, at every sermon, as he did to Peter, *Etiam Petre dormis? Sleepest thou Peter?* couldst thou not watch with me one hour? A slumbering and drowsy heart very ill becomes the business and presence of him that keepeth Israel and slumbers not.

These were the attendants of Christ. As our glory is not complete without society, no more would Christ have his; therefore his transfiguration had two companions, Moses and Elias; as St. Paul says of himself, "whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not, God knows;" so say I of these two: of Elias there may seem less doubt, since we know that his body was assumed to heaven; and might as well come down for Christ's glory, as go up for his own; although some grave authors, as Calvin, Oecolampadius, Bayle, Fulke, have held his body, with Enoch's, resolved into their elements, but I am of a different opinion. And for Moses; *Enoch translatus est in carne, & Elias carneus raptus est in cælum, &c.* Enoch was translated in the flesh, and Elias being yet in the flesh was taken into heaven; saith Jerom, in his epistle Ad Pammachium.

Though it be rare and singular, and Austin makes much scruple of it, yet why might not he, after death, return in his body to the glory of Christ's transfiguration, as well as afterwards many of the saints did to the glory of his resurrection? I cannot therefore with this expositor think there is any reason why Moses should take another, a borrowed body, rather than his own. Heaven could not give two fitter companions, more admired by the Jews, for their miracles; more gracious with God, for their faith and holiness: both of them admitted to the conference with God, in Horeb: both of them types of Christ: both of them fasted forty days; both of them, for the glory of God, suffered many perils; both divided the waters; both the messengers of God to kings; both of them marvellous, as in their life, so in their end: a chariot of angels took away Elias; he was sought for by the prophets, and not found: Michael strove with the devil, for the body of Moses; he was sought for by the Jews, and not found; and now, both of them are found here together, on Tabor. This Elias shews himself to the Royal Prophet of his church; this Moses shews himself to the true Michael. Moses, the publisher of the law; Elias, the chief of the prophets; shew themselves to the God of the law and prophets, *Alter populi informator aliquando, alter reformator quandoque*; one the informer once of the people, the other the reformer sometimes, saith Tertullian: *Alter initiator Veteris Testamenti, alter consummator Novi*, one the first register of the Old Testament, the other the shutter up of the New. I verily think with Hilary, that these two are pointed at as the forerunners of the second coming of Christ, as now they were the foretellers of his departure; neither doubt I that these are the two witnesses which are alluded to in the Apocalypse; notwithstanding divers of the fathers have thrust Enoch into the place of Moses; look upon the place, Rev. xi. 5. Who but Elias can he be, of whom it is said, "If any man will hurt him, fire proceedeth out of his mouth and devoureth his enemies?" alluding to 2 Kings i. Who but Elias, of whom it is said, "he hath power to shut the heaven, that it rain not in the days of his prophesying?" alluding to 1 Kings xviii. Who but Moses, of whom it is said, "he hath power to turn the waters into blood, and smite the earth with all manner of plagues?" alluding to Exod. vii. and viii. But understand me right; let me not seem a friend to the publicans of Rome, an abettor of those Alcoran-like fables of our Popish doctors, who (not seeing the wood for trees) *hærent in cortice*, stick in the bark, taking all concerning that antichrist, according to the letter, *Odi, & arceo*, "I detest and thrust them from me." So shall Moses and Elias come again in those witnesses, as Elias is already come in John the Baptist: their spirits shall be in these witnesses, whose bodies and spirits were witnesses both of the present glory and future passion of Christ. Doubtless, many thousand angels saw this sight, and were not seen; these two both saw, and were seen. Oh how great a happiness was it for these two great prophets, in their glorified flesh, to see their glorified Saviour, who before his incarnation had spoken to them! To speak to that God-man, by whom they were glorified, and to become prophets, not to men, but to God! And if Moses's face so shone before, when he spoke to him without a body in Mount Sinai; in the midst of the flames, and clouds

clouds; how did it shine now, when himself glorified, speaks to him, a man, in Tabor, in light and majesty? Elias hid his face before with a mantle, when he passed by him in the rock: now with open face he beholds him present, and in his own glory adores him. Let that impudent Marcion, who ascribes the law and prophets to another God, and devises an hostility betwixt Christ and them, be ashamed to see Moses and Elias, not only *in colloquio*, but *in consortio claritatis*, "not only in conference, but in partnership of brightness," (as Tertullian speaks) with Christ; whom if he had misliked, he had the choice of all the choir of heaven: and now choosing them, why were they not *in fœdibus et tenebris*, "in rags and darkness?" *Sic in alienos demonstrat illos dum secum habet, sic relinquendos docet quos sibi jungit: Sic destruit quos de radiis suis extruit*, "So doth he shew them far from strangeness to him, whom he hath with him; so doth he teach them to be forsaken, whom he joins with himself. So doth he destroy those whom he graces with his beams of glory," saith that Father. His act verifies his word, "Think not that I come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil them," Mat. v. 17. Oh what consolation, what confirmation was this to the disciples, to see such examples of their future glory! such witnesses and adorers of the eternal deity of their Master! They saw in Moses and Elias what they themselves should be; how could they ever fear to be miserable, after seeing such precedents of their ensuing glory! How could they fear to die, who saw in others the happiness of their own change! The rich glutton pleads with Abraham, that if one came to them from the dead, they will amend: Abraham answers, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them:" behold, here is both Moses and the prophets; and these two come from the dead: how can we now but be persuaded of the happy state of another world, unless we will make ourselves worse than the damned? See and consider that the saints of God are not lost, but departed; gone into a far country with their Master, to return again, richer and better than they went. Lest we should think this the condition of Elias only, that was caught up into heaven; see here, Moses matched with him, who died and was buried; and is this the state of these two saints alone? shall none be seen with him in the Tabor of heaven, but those who have seen him on Horeb and Carmel? Oh thou weak christian, was only one or two limbs of Christ's body glorious in the transfiguration, or the whole? he is the head, we are the members. If Moses and Elias were more excellent parts, tongue, or hand; let us be but heels, or toes, his body is not perfect in glory without ours. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory," Colos. iii. 4. How truly may we say to death, 'Rejoice not, mine enemy; though I fall, yet shall I rise, yea, I shall rise in falling.' "We shall not all sleep, we shall be changed," saith Paul to his Thessalonians. Elias was changed, Moses slept, both appeared; to teach us, that neither our sleep nor change can keep us from appearing with him: when therefore thou shalt receive the sentence of death, on Mount Nebo; or when the fiery chariot shall come, and sweep thee from this vale of mortality; remember thy glorious re-appearance with thy Saviour, and thou canst not but be comforted, and cheerfully triumph over that last enemy; boldly meeting those terrors, with the assurance of a blessed resurrection to eternal glory.

The day after they came down from the mount, Jesus returns to those other nine of his apostles, whom he had left behind, and finds a great many about them, and the scribes questioning with them. He inquires what they were arguing and disputing about? Presently one of the company, who was father of a lunatic son (whom the devil handled most miserably, depriving him of the use of his speech, and casting him into fits of the falling-sickness, tearing him, and making him foam and gnash with his teeth, and throwing him into the fire or water, which soever was next), falling upon his knees before our Saviour, made answer, that he had brought his son (which was his only child) to his disciples to be healed, and to have the devil cast out of him, and they being requested to do it, were not able; upon this, Jesus chides them severely, that when he had been so long with them, and given them power to heal diseases, and in some cases, it seems, prescribed prayer and fasting, as the means of doing it, they now, through the weakness of their faith, and the neglect of that means, were not able to cast out this

devil. Then he calls for the lunatic to be brought to him. Upon the sight of Christ, the devil cast the youth presently into most grievous fits, tormenting and abusing him in a most pitiful manner. Our Saviour asks his father how long it had been so with him, he answers, From his childhood; and then desires him, if he could help him, he would. Christ replies, if he could believe, and persuade himself of the divine power, that which he desired should be done for him: for all things that are agreeable to God's will, and make for his glory, are possible to be done for him that believes; and the believer is able by faith, and resting on the power of God, to procure them to be done for him. The man cries out with tears, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief;" do thou by thy divine power confirm and strengthen my weak faith. Hereupon our Saviour, seeing the people running together, and earnestly expecting the issue of the matter, rebuked the evil spirit, saying unto him, "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him." These titles he gave him on account of those malicious and cruel effects which he had wrought in the youth. Upon this, the evil spirit, being forced (though very unwillingly) to yield up his possession, making a horrid noise, and grievously racking and tormenting the body of the youth, went out of him, and left him as one dead. Christ, taking him by the hand, restores him immediately to strength and soundness of body. After the working of this miracle, he retires himself into some private house, and there his disciples desire to know of him, why they could not cast out this devil? He shews them a twofold reason thereof.

First, Their unbelief, or weakness of faith. For it seems their faith at this time flagged and failed; whereas the least measure of miraculous faith (as he tells them) set to work upon the warrant of God's promise, and purged from unbelief, and carnal confidence (as the least grain of mustard-seed puts forth the sharpness, taste, and smell, of its own kind) would be able to effect the greatest works, and overcome the greatest difficulties, though they seemed as impossible as the removing of mountains, Mat. xvii. 20, 21.

Secondly, Some kind of devils are more cruel, malicious, and outrageous than others, and having, for a long time (by God's permission) held possession of the bodies of those into whom they are entered, cannot be dispossessed, or cast out, but by extraordinary and fervent prayer and fasting added to faith. So that another thing they failed in was this, that they used not fasting and prayer for the exciting and quickening their faith; and joined not great fervency and intenseness of devotion therewith; for these are the means they ought to have used for the ejecting this kind of devils.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS.

How different, how contrary, are our conditions here upon earth! While our Saviour is transfigured on the mount, his disciples are perplexed in the valley. Three of his choice followers were with him above, ravished with the miraculous proofs of his Godhead: nine others were troubled with the business of a stubborn devil below.

Much people met to attend Christ, and there they will stay till he comes down from Tabor. Their zeal and devotion brought them thither, their patient perseverance held them there; we are not worthy the name of his clients, if we cannot painfully seek him, and submissively wait his leisure.

He that was now awhile retired into the mount, to confer with his Father, and to receive the attendance of Moses and Elias, returns into the valley to the multitude. He was singled out, awhile, for prayer and contemplation; now, he was joined with the multitude for their miraculous cure, and heavenly instruction; we that are his spiritual agents must be either preparing in the mount, or exercising in the valley: one while in the mount of meditation; in the valley of action, another; alone to study, in the assembly to preach: here is much variety, but all is work.

Moses, when he came down from the hill, heard music in the valley: Christ, when he came down from the hill, heard discord; the scribes it seems were setting hard upon the disciples. They saw Christ absent, nine of his train left in the valley, those they fly upon.

upon. As the devil, so his imps, watch close for all advantages: no subtle enemy but will be sure to attempt that part, where is likely to be least defence, most weakness; when the spouse misses him whom her soul loveth, every watchman hath a buffet from her. Oh, Saviour, if thou be never so little stepped aside, we are sure to be assaulted with powerful temptations.

They that durst say nothing to the Master, as soon as his back is turned, fall foul upon his weakest disciples. Even at the first hatching the serpent was thus crafty to begin at the weaker vessel; experience and time hath not abated his wit; if he still work upon silly women laden with divers lusts, upon rude and ungrounded ignorants, it is no other than his old practice.

Our Saviour, upon the skirts of the hill, knew well what was done in the plain; and therefore hastes down to the rescue of his disciples. The clouds and vapours do not sooner scatter upon the sun's breaking forth, than these cavils vanish at the presence of Christ; instead of opposition, they are strait upon their knees; here are now no quarrels but humble salutations; and if Christ's question did not force their reply, the scribes had found no tongue.

Doubtless, there were many eager patients in this throng, yet none made so much noise as the father of the dæmoniac; upon this occasion it is not likely that the scribes held a contest with the disciples; if they wrangled, he sues, and that from his knees. Whom will not need make both humble, and eloquent? The case was woful, and accordingly expressed. A son is a dear name; but this was his only son: were his grief ordinary, the sorrow would be less: but he is a fearful spectacle of judgment, for he is lunatic: were this lunacy merely from a natural distemper, it were more tolerable; but this is aggravated by the possession of a cruel spirit, that handles him in a most grievous manner: yet were he but in the rank of other dæmoniacs, the discomfort were more easy, but lo, this spirit is worse than all other his fellows; others are usually dispossessed by the disciples; this is beyond their power: "I besought thy disciples to cast him out, but they could not: therefore, Lord, have thou mercy on my son." The despair of all other helps sends us importunately to the God of power: here was his refuge; the strong man had possession, it was only the stronger than he that can eject him. O God, spiritual wickednesses have naturally seized upon our souls; all human helps are too weak, only thy mercy shall call forth thy power to our deliverance.

What bowels could choose but to yearn at the distress of this poor young man! Frensy had taken his brain; that disease was but health in comparison of the tyrannical possession of that evil spirit wherewith it was seconded: out of hell there could not be a greater misery: his senses are either gone, or else left to torment him; he is torn and racked, so that he foams and gnashes; he pines and languishes; he is cast sometimes into the fire, sometimes into the water: how that malicious tyrant rejoices in the mischief done to the creature of God! Had earth any thing more pernicious than fire and water, thither he had been thrown, though rather for torture than dispatch; it was too much favour to die at once. Oh God, with how deadly enemies hast thou matched us! Abate thou their power, since their malice will not be abated.

How many think of this case with pity and horror; and in the mean time are insensible of their own more fearful condition!

It is but oftentimes that the devil could cast this young man into a temporary fire; he would cast the sinner into an eternal fire, whose everlasting burnings have no intermission. No fire comes amiss to him; the fire of affliction, the fire of lust, the fire of hell! Oh God, make us apprehensive of the danger of our sin; and secure us from the fearful issue of sin!

All these similar effects follow his spiritual possession; how doth he tear and rack them whom he vexes, and distracts with inordinate cares and sorrows! How do they foam and gnash, whom he hath drawn to an impatient repining at God's afflicting hand! how do they pine away, who hourly decay, and languish in grace!

Oh the lamentable condition of sinful souls! so much more dangerous by their being less felt.

But

But all this while, what part hath the moon in this man's misery? how comes the name of that goodly planet in question? Certainly, these diseases of the brain follow much the course of this queen of moisture; that power which she hath in humours, is drawn to the advantage of the malicious spirit; her predominancy is abused to promote his malice; whether it were for the better opportunity of his vexation; or whether for the drawing of envy, and discredit upon so noble a creature. It is no new thing with that subtle enemy to fasten his effects upon those secondary causes which he usurps to his own purposes. Whatever be the means, he is the tormentor. Much wisdom is necessary to distinguish betwixt the evil spirit abusing the good creature; and the good creature being abused by the evil spirit.

He that knew all things, asks questions; "How long hath he been so?" Not to inform himself; since that devil could have done nothing without the knowledge, without the leave of the God of spirits; but that, by the confession of the parent, he might set forth the woful condition of the child; that the thanks and glory of the cure might be so much greater, as the complaint was more grievous; "He answered, From a child."

O God! how I adore the depth of thy wise, just, and powerful dispensation! Thou that couldst say, "I have loved Jacob, and Esau have I hated," ere the children had done good or evil; thou thoughtest also good, before this child could be capable of good or evil, to yield him over to the power of that evil one. What need I ask for any other reason than that, which is the rule of all justice, thy will? Yet, even these weak eyes can see the just grounds of thine actions: that child, though an Israelite, was conceived and born in that sin, which both could and did give Satan an interest in him: besides, the actual sins of the parents deserved this revenge upon that part of themselves. Rather, O God, let me magnify this mercy; that we and ours escape this judgment, than question thy justice, that some escape not. How just might it have been with thee, that we, who have given way to Satan in our sins, should have way and scope given to Satan over us in our punishments. It is thy praise that any of us are free; it is no cause of quarrel that some of us suffer.

Do I wonder to see Satan's bodily possession of this young man from a child; when I see his spiritual possession of every son of Adam from a longer date: not from a child, but from the womb; yea, in it: why should not Satan possess his own? we are all by nature the sons of wrath. It is time for us to renounce him in baptism, whose we are till we be regenerate. He hath a right to us in our first birth; our new birth releases us from him, and cuts off all his claim. How miserable are they that have nothing but nature! better had it been to have been unborn, than not to be born again.

And if this poor soul, from an infant, were thus miserably handled, having done no actual evil, how just cause have we to fear the like judgments, who by many foul offences have deserved to draw this executioner upon us! Oh my soul, thou hast not room enough for thankfulness to that good God, who hath not delivered thee up to that malignant spirit.

The distressed father sits not still, neglects not means, "I brought him to thy disciples." Doubtless the man came first to seek for Christ himself; finding him absent, he makes suit to the disciples. To whom should we have recourse in all our spiritual complaints, but to the agents and messengers of God? The noise of the like cures had surely brought this man with much confidence to crave their succour; and now, how cold was he at the heart, when he found that his hopes were frustrated! The disciples could not cast him out. No doubt, they tried their best; they laid their wonted charge upon this dumb spirit; but all in vain. They that could come with joy and triumph to their Master, and say, "The devils are subject to us," find now themselves matched with a stubborn and refractory spirit. Their way was hitherto smooth and fair; they met with no rub till now: and now, surely the father of the dæmoniac was not more troubled at this event than themselves. How could they choose but fear; lest their Master had, with himself, withdrawn that spiritual power which they had formerly exercised; their heart must therefore needs fail them with their success.

The man complained not of their impotence; it were fondly injurious to accuse them for

for that which they could not do; had the want been in their will, they had well deserved a querulous language; it was no fault to want power: he only complains of the stubbornness, and laments the invincibleness of that evil spirit.

I should wrong you, O ye blessed followers of Christ, if I should say, that as Israel, when Moses was gone up into the mount, lost their belief with their guide; so ye, missing your Master (who was now ascended up to his Tabor), were to seek for your faith: rather, the wisdom of God saw reason to check your over-assured forwardness; and both to pull down your hearts by a just humiliation in the sense of your own weakness; and to raise up your hearts to new acts of dependence upon that sovereign power from which your limited virtue was derived.

What was more familiar to the disciples, than ejecting devils? In this only it is denied them. Our good God sometimes finds it requisite to hold us short in those abilities whereof we make the least doubt, that we may feel whence we had them: God will be no less glorified in what we cannot do, than in what we can do; if his graces were always at our command, and ever alike, they would seem natural, and soon run into contempt; now, we are justly held in an awful dependence upon that gracious hand, which so gives, as not to cloy us; and so denies, as not to discourage us.

Who could now but expect that our Saviour should have pitied and bemoaned the condition of this sad father and miserable son, and have let fall some words of comfort upon them? Instead whereof, I hear him chiding and complaining, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, how long shall I suffer you?" Complaining not of that woeful father, and more woeful son: it was not his method to add affliction to the distressed, to break such bruised reeds; but of those scribes, who, upon the failing of the success of this suit, had insulted concerning the disability of the followers of Christ, and depraved his power; and, perhaps, this impatient father, seduced by their suggestion, might slip into some thoughts of distrust.

There could not be a greater crimination, than faithless and perverse: faithless, in not believing; perverse, in being obstinately fixed in their unbelief; doubtless, these men were not free from other notorious crimes; all were drowned in their infidelity. Moral uncleannesses or violences may seem more heinous to men: none are so odious to God as these intellectual wickednesses.

What a happy change is here wrought in one breath of Christ! "How long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me:" the one is a word of anger; the other, of favour: his indignation does not exceed or impeach his goodness. What a sweet mixture there is in the perfect simplicity of the divine nature! In the midst of judgment he remembers mercy, yea he acts it: his sun shines in the midst of this storm: whether he frown, or whether he smile, it is all to one gracious purpose, that he may win the incredulous and disobedient. Whither should the rigour of all our censures tend, but to edification, and not to destruction? We are physicians, we are not executioners; we give purges to cure, and not poisons to kill. It is for the just Judge to say one day to reprobate souls, "Depart from me:" in the mean time, it is for us to invite all that are spiritually possessed to the participation of mercy, "Bring him hither to me."

O Saviour, distance was no hinderance to thy work; why should the dæmoniac be brought to thee? Was it that this deliverance might be the better evidenced; and that the beholders might see it was not for nothing that thy disciples were opposed with so refractory a spirit? or was it that the Scribes might be witnesses of that strong hostility which was betwixt thee and that foul spirit; and be ashamed of their blasphemous slander? Or was it that the father of the dæmoniac might be quickened in that faith, which now, through the suggestion of the Scribes, began to droop; when he should hear and see Christ so chearfully undertake and perform that concern of which they bid him despair?

The possessed is brought; the devil is rebuked, and ejected; that stiff spirit, which stood out boldly against the commands of the disciples, cannot but sloop to the voice of the Master; that power, which at first cast him out of heaven, easily dispossesses him of an house of clay. The Lord rebuke thee, Satan! and then thou canst not but flee.

The disciples, who were not used to these repulses, cannot but be troubled at their want of success; "Master, why could not we cast him out?" Had they been conscious of any defect in themselves, they had never asked the question; little did they think to hear of their unbelief. Had they not had great faith, they could not have cast out any devils; had they not had some want of faith, they had cast out this. It is possible for us to be defective in some graces, and not to feel it.

Moreover, their weakness is not so much the cause of this miscarriage, as the strength of that evil spirit; "This kind goes not out but by prayer and fasting." Weaker spirits were usually ejected by a command; this devil was more sturdy and boisterous. As there are degrees of stature in men, so there are degrees of strength and rebellion in spiritual wickednesses. Here bidding will not serve, they must pray; and praying will not serve, without fasting. They must pray to God that they may prevail; they must fast to make their prayer more fervent, more effectual. We cannot now command, but we can fast and pray. How good is our God to us, that while he hath not thought fit to continue to us those means, which are less powerful, for dispossessing the powers of darkness, yet hath he given us the greater. While we can fast and pray, God will command for us; then shall Satan not prevail against us.

Our Saviour, now departing from the place where he wrought this miracle, determined to go as privately as might be with his disciples through Galilee, towards Capernaum, that he might be more free and at liberty to instruct them in those things which were needful for him to teach them, and particularly in the doctrine of his passion and resurrection. He had taught them this before, but they were slow to conceive and believe it, partly from their natural averfeness to the cross, and partly from that inveterate opinion, so deeply rooted in them, touching the temporal kingdom of the Messiah. He doth therefore here again foretell them of his death and sufferings, and that he should rise again the third day. But they understood not this matter thoroughly, that is, the mystery of his death, and how he, whom they acknowledged for the Messiah, should be put to death; much less did they conceive how he, being dead, should rise again the third day. And though they were troubled in their minds at these things, yet they were afraid to ask him further about them.

C H A P T E R VIII.

THE TRIBUTE-MONEY PAID. CONTENTION OF THE DISCIPLES ABOUT PRE-EMINENCE. CHRIST RECOMMENDS HUMILITY AND FORGIVENESS. THE MOTION OF TWO FIERY DISCIPLES REPELLED. CHRIST SENDETH SEVENTY DISCIPLES TO PREACH. HE COMES TO THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, AND TEACHES IN THE TEMPLE. THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY. CHRIST, IN THE TREASURY OF THE TEMPLE, DISPUTES WITH THE JEWS, WHO REVILE HIM. THE BEGGAR BORN BLIND CURED BY HIM.

ABOUT this time, it seems, the half shekel is demanded of our Saviour, which every Israelite was bound annually to pay for the redemption of his life, according to the law, *Exod. xxx. 12.* "When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them: that there be no plague amongst them, when thou numberest them, *ver. 13.* This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary: a shekel is twenty gerahs: an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord." This half shekel went towards the repair of the temple, and to the buying of things needful for the service thereof. And though Christ was the Son of the great King, for whose service that tribute was imposed, and so might have pleaded immunity (for kings take tribute of their subjects, and not of their own children), yet, to avoid offence, he pays it, having first miraculously fetched it out of a fish's mouth; shewing, in that one action, both his power and his poverty.

Useful

Useful REFLECTIONS *and* REMARKS.

There was no truer paymaster of the king's dues, than he that was King of kings. Well did Peter know, that he did not only give, but preach tribute; when the Herodians laid snares for him, as supposing that so great a prophet would be all for the liberty and exemption of God's chosen people, he choaks them with their own coin; and told them, the stamp argued their right, "Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

O Saviour! how can thy servants challenge that freedom which thyself had not? Who, that pretends affinity to thee, can claim homage from those to whom thou gavest it? If thou, by whom kings reign, forbarest not to pay tribute to an heathen and prince, what power under thee can deny it to those that rule for thee?

That demand was made without doors; and no sooner is Peter come in, than he is prevented by his Master's question: "What thinkest thou, Simon, of whom do the kings of the earth receive tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?" This very interrogation was answer enough to that which Peter meant to move; he that could thus know the heart, was not, in strict justice, liable to human exactions.

But, O Saviour, may I presume to ask, What is this to thee? Thou hast said, "My kingdom is not of this world;" how does it concern thee, what is done by the kings of the earth, or imposed upon the sons of earthly kings? Thou wouldst be the Son of an humble Virgin; and chosest not a royal, but a servile state. I dispute not thy natural right to the throne, by the lineal descent from the loins of Judah and David; why then should I plead that which thou wavest? It is thy divine royalty and Sonship which thou here justly urgest; the argument is irrefragable and convictive. If the kings of the earth so privilege their children, that they are free from all tributes and impositions; how much more shall the King of Heaven give this immunity to his only natural Son; so that in true reason thou mightest challenge an exemption for thee and thy train: thou mightest, O Saviour; and no less challenge a tribute from all the kings of the earth to thee, by whom all powers are ordained: reason cannot mutter against this claim; the creature owes itself, and whatever it hath, to the Maker; he owes nothing to it: "Then are the children free:" he that hath right to all, needs not pay any thing; else there would be a subjection in sovereignty; and men should be debtors to themselves. But this right was thine own peculiar; and admits no partners; why dost thou speak of children, as of more? and, extending this privilege to Peter, sayest, "Lest we scandalize them:" Was it because thy disciples, being of thy robe, might justly seem interested in the liberties of their Master? Surely, no otherwise were they children, no otherwise free. Away with that fanatical conceit, which challenges an immunity from secular commands and taxes, to a spiritual and adoptive sonship; no earthly saintship can exempt us from tribute to whom tribute belongs. There is a freedom, O Saviour, which our Christianity calls us to affect; a freedom from the yoke of sin and Satan; from the servitude of our corrupt affections; we cannot be sons, if we be not thus free. Oh, free thou us by thy free Spirit, from the miserable bondage of our nature, so shall the children be free: but from these secular duties no man is less free than the children. O Saviour, thou wast free, and wouldst not be so; thou wast free by natural right, and yet wouldst not be free by voluntary dispensation, "Lest an offence might be taken." Surely, had there followed an offence, it had been taken only, and not given. Woe be to the man by whom the offence cometh: it cometh by him that gives it; it cometh by him that takes it, when it is not given; no part of this blame could have cleaved to thee, either way; yet such was thy goodness, that thou wouldst not suffer an offence unjustly taken at that which thou mightest justly have denied. How jealous should we be even of others' perils! how careful so to moderate our power

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in the use of lawful things, that our charity may prevent others' scandal? to forego our own right for another's safety! Oh the deplorable condition of those wilful men, who care not what impediments they lay in the way to heaven! not forbearing by known lewdness to draw others into their own damnation!

To avoid the unjust offence even of very publicans, Jesus will work a miracle. Peter is sent to the sea; and that not with a net, but with a hook; the disciple was now in his own trade: he knew a net might inclose many fishes, an hook could take but one; with that hook must he go and angle for the tribute money; a fish shall bring him a stater in her mouth; and that fish that bites first! What an unusual bearer is here! what an unlikely element to yield a piece of ready coin!

Oh that omnipotent power, which could command the fish to be both his treasurer to keep his silver, and his purveyor to bring it! Now, whether, O Saviour, thou causedst this fish to take up that shekel out of the bottom of the sea; or whether, by thine almighty word, thou madest it in an instant, in the mouth of that fish; it is neither possible to determine, nor necessary to inquire. I rather adore thine infinite knowledge and power, that couldst make use of unlikeliest means; that couldst serve thyself of the very fishes of the sea, in a business of earthly and civil employment. It was not out of need that thou didst this (though I do not find that thou ever affectedst a full purse). What veins of gold, or mines of silver, did not lie open to thy command! but out of a desire to teach Peter, that while he would be tributary to Cæsar, the very fish of the sea were tributary to him; how should this encourage our dependence upon that omnipotent hand of thine, which hath heaven, earth, and sea at thy disposal! Still thou art the same for thy members, which thou wast for thyself, the head; rather than offence shall be given to the world, by a seeming neglect of thy dear children, thou wilt cause the very fowls of heaven to bring them meat, and the fish of the sea to bring them money. Oh, let us ever look up to thee by the eye of our faith; and not be wanting in our dependence upon thee, who canst not be wanting in thy providence over us!

Being now come to Capernaum, the chief city in Galilee, with his disciples, Jesus asks them, what it was, about which they disputed and contended among themselves by the way, as they journeyed thither. Knowing themselves guilty of ambition and affectation of pre-eminence one above another, they were ashamed at first to confess the matter; but at length they acquaint him therewith, and are bold enough to propound the question to him, "Who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Our Saviour had newly spoken to them concerning his "Rising from death on the third day:" And though they did not, it seems, well understand the mystery of his death and resurrection, yet it is probable they gathered thus much from his words, that at the time of his resurrection, which was not far off, he should begin to shew forth the glory of his kingdom. And though they thought this kingdom should be divine and spiritual, and therefore call it the kingdom of heaven, Matth. xviii. 1. yet they supposed it should be exercised upon earth, and that after the manner of earthly kingdoms, in which there are distinct places of honour and offices.

To teach them humility, Christ took a little child, and, holding him in his arms, shewed him as an example of humility and meekness, which they ought to imitate; plainly telling them, that the way to be great in his kingdom, is to be humble; and therefore, "Except they be converted," that is, repent of their pride and ambition, "and become as little children," in humility of mind and sincere innocence, they can neither be members of his kingdom of grace here, nor shall enter into his kingdom of glory hereafter.

Then he declares how dear and precious in his account such Christians are, who resemble little children in humility. For, 1. Whatsoever respect or kindness is shewn to such for his sake, and because they believe in him, and belong to him (Mat. x. 40.) he takes it as done to himself. 2. The love that is shewed to such, is not only shewed to him, but to his Father also.

Our Saviour having thus spoken of receiving and entertaining humble Christians in his name, John steps in and propounds a case to him, of one they had met with, who went about indeed in his name, and with invocation of his name did cast out devils, yet did not own himself his disciple, by following him, and therefore they forbid him. Christ declares his dislike of what they had done, and commands they should not forbid him any more; because it was unlikely that he that wrought miracles in his name, should be an enemy to him. For none were to be taken for his enemies, that did not some way or other declare themselves so to be, and this man no way shewing himself an enemy to him, but rather the contrary, he was to be esteemed a friend, and well-wisher both to him and his doctrine: For as it is commonly seen (according to the proverb), that he who goes out into the field in a battle, always takes one part or other; and his not engaging against a side, is an argument he is for it: so this man's not opposing him was an argument he was his friend, one that believes in him, and is a favourer of his doctrine.

Having now answered John (by whom he had been interrupted), he proceeds in his sermon. And having before begun to recommend to his disciples the practice of love towards such Christians as do resemble little children in humility; he now goes on with the same matter, and promises to reward all those who shall perform any office of charity or mercy, though never so small, though no more than a cup of cold water, unto such Christians, because they are his disciples, and belong to him, verse 41. and on the contrary, threatens most direful judgments and punishments to such as wrong and injure and discourage in their Christian course any true, humble, and sincere disciples of his, that believe on him; declaring, that to have a mill-stone hung about their necks, and to be thrown into the sea, would be more easy and tolerable for them, than that which they shall suffer in hell for this sin, except they repent, ver. 42.

And because humble Christians are apt to be despised in the world, he gives express command, that such should not be contemned or injuriously used, and that for these reasons: 1. Because God hath given them his holy angels to be their guardians and ministers (Heb. i. 14.); and they have always access to the throne of God, to receive commands from him for their protection and benefit, and for the punishment of those that shall despise and oppress them. 2. The Son of man came to seek and save such humble persons as were lost in their own eyes; and if any one of those that are his sheep, go astray of himself, or be put out of the way, or seduced by others, he like a good shepherd, leaving the rest of the flock (whom he knows to be safe in the pastures or field), goes to seek that lost sheep; and having found it, rejoices more at the sight of it than at beholding his whole flock that never ran that hazard. So unwilling God is that the meanest Christian, who sincerely believes in Christ, should perish, Mat. xviii. from 10 to 15.

Then he shews what great mischiefs are likely to happen to mankind, by reason of such scandals, stumbling-blocks, and hindrances, which will be laid in their way, through the malice of Satan and wicked men, partly by the venting false doctrine, and partly by evil example, to discourage them in their Christian course: but it will be very sad for that man, by whom such scandals come; for God's permission neither forces man's will, nor excuses any evil act.

Therefore he exhorts them carefully to shun, avoid, and put away from them all those things that may be an occasion of sin, either to themselves or others: and whatsoever other things they be (whether the corrupt lusts and affections of their own hearts, or sinful profits and pleasures, or carnal friends, though as dear to them as their right eye, or their right hand) which shall endanger the withdrawing their souls from Christ, they should willingly part with, it being exceedingly more eligible, with the loss of them, to enjoy a glorious and heavenly eternity, than, by a temporary enjoying of them, to be thrown into hell, "where the worm never dies, and the fire is not quenched," that is, where the remorse for such folly, and sharp torments attending it, shall never have an end, Mark ix. from 43 to 49.

He further shews, that as the sacrifices under the Levitical law were to be seasoned with salt, and so offered by fire unto the Lord, Lev. ii. 13. so it is necessary for Christians, in order to their escaping hell-fire, and that they may be accepted of God, that

they be seasoned with salt, and purged with fire, that is, that they be purged and purified from their lusts and corruptions by the power of the word of God, and the doctrine of the gospel, Jer. xxiii. 29. by afflictions and tribulations, Zech. xiii. 9. and by the power and sanctifying efficacy of the Spirit of God, who hath the virtue of fire, Mat. iii. 11. Mark ix. 49.

And having spoken how their hearts must be seasoned with the salt of grace and holiness, he takes occasion to hint unto his apostles their duty, whom he had before compared to salt, Mat. v. 13. "Ye are the salt of the earth," intimating, Luke xiv. 34, 35. that they ought to be men of holy and savoury spirits themselves, and by their doctrine and conversation should season others; and while they continued so to do, they would be exceedingly useful to the world: but if they should lose their favouriness, that is, degenerate and fall off from their fidelity, diligence, and conscienciousness in their ministry, they would become like salt that hath lost its saltiness and acrimony, which alone makes it useful and profitable.

He exhorts them likewise to maintain in themselves heavenly wisdom, whereof salt is an emblem, and favouriness of spirit; and to exercise their seasoning virtue upon others, and to maintain concord, union, and love among themselves, and to rid themselves of that corrupt humour of ambition, and carnal affectation of superiority one above another, which appeared to be so prevalent in them, ver. 50.

Having cautioned them so strictly against scandalizing humble Christians, lest, through fear of that, they should fall into another vice, viz. of connivance and indulgence to one another's faults; he gives rules about dealing with a trespassing and offending brother, that walks offensively in a church-society. First, By private admonition. Secondly, If that succeed not, to admonish him before two or three. And, thirdly, If no reformation follow upon that, then to tell the church; and what the church rightly assembled do in his name, according to his will, in the due exercise of the keys of doctrine and discipline, whether to the condemning the guilty, or absolving the penitent, he will ratify in heaven, Mat. xviii. 15, 16, 17, 18.

And that he may strike the greater terror into persons justly excommunicated, and may more strongly comfort the penitent duly absolved, he declares, that when but even two or three church-rulers and officers shall meet together in his name, 1 Cor. v. 4. and agree upon any thing here on earth agreeable to the will and word of God, and shall commend the same by prayer unto him, it shall be ratified in heaven: for his gracious presence and assistance shall be with his church, be the number great or small, when they join together in prayer, or church-censures, or other religious duties, ver. 19, 20.

Lastly, By the parable of a king forgiving one of his servants ten thousand talents, who humbled himself before him, as being unable to pay him; and yet he presently took one of his fellow-servants by the throat for a hundred pence which he owed him, &c. he shews, that except they be willing to forgive, and do forgive particular injuries done to them, how often soever their brother, repenting, desires pardon, they cut themselves off from being pardoned by God, against whom they sin oftener than any man can do against them.

Now the feast of tabernacles being at hand, the kinsmen of Jesus (called his brethren after the manner of the Jews, yet not any of those he had called to be apostles, but some others) spake to him to go up with them to the feast, as kinsmen usually went together at such times, Luke ii. 44. desiring that he should appear in the power and glory of his miracles in Judæa, the centre of the nation at that time, that if he were the Messiah, he might testify it there, as they expected the Messiah should do; and that the disciples he had gathered in Judæa, might be strengthened thereby: for no man (say they) that intends to be famous, must do his miracles in private. If therefore he had power to do so great things, when and where he pleased, they advise him to go up to Jerusalem, that theatre of the world, and do them there; though their scope and end was, that they themselves might get credit and honour by their relation to a person that could do such wonders. And yet, notwithstanding he had wrought so many miracles among them, they conceived
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but carnally of him, neither did they believe in him, thinking the privacy he affected not answerable to the port and state the Messiah should appear in. Jesus answers them, that they might go when they would, and as publicly as they would; but with regard to him, his time of going up was not yet come; he should not go up with them, nor so publicly as they did. The world did not hate them, they being children thereof, "for the world loves its own," John xv. 19. but him it hated, because he reprov'd its sins: and therefore he should not expose himself to its malice further than he saw fit. Hereupon he refused to go up with them, and remained a while after them in the place where he now was.

Not long after, Jesus being now come within almost half a year of the time of his death, at his own time (not in the company of his kinsmen, but with his own disciples, and some few followers) he goes up to Jerusalem to this feast in a private manner, lest he should stir up and awaken the jealousy of the sanhedrin. Being to pass through the country of the Samaritans, he sent some of his disciples before as harbingers into one of their villages to provide for them against they came: but the Samaritans (by reason of their extreme enmity and hatred against the Jews, and because he and his company appeared to them to be going to Jerusalem to worship, whereas they never do so, but worship in mount Gerizim, as we read before, John iv. 20.) refused to give him and his followers any entertainment. Hereupon James and John importune him to give them leave to command fire from heaven immediately upon them, as Elias did in another case, 2 Kings i. 10. But Christ rebukes them for this their rash zeal, shewing them, that a spirit of revenge moved them thereto. If they were actuated by his spirit, they would not seek the ruin of any: for he came to save, and not to destroy; and so all the revenge that he thought fit to take on these Samaritans, was, to leave them, and quietly to go to another village.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS.

Faith has done as great things as ever presumption undertook; but there is great difference in the enterprises of both: the one hath a warrant, either by instinct or express command; the other, none at all. Indeed, had these two disciples either meant, or said, 'Master, if it be thy pleasure to command us to call down fire from heaven, we know thy word shall enable us to do what thou requirest; if the words be ours, the power shall be thine;' this had been but holy, modest, faithful; but if they supposed there needed nothing but permission only, and that, might they be but let loose, they could go alone, they presumed, they offended.

Yet had they thus overshot themselves in some pious and charitable motion, the fault had been the less: now the act had in it both cruelty and private revenge: their zeal was not worthy of more praise, than their fury of censure. That fire should fall down from heaven upon men, is a fearful thing to think of; and what has not been often done. It was done in the case of Sodom, when those five unclean cities burned with the unnatural fire of hellish lust; it was done two different times at the suit of Elijah; it was done (in a height of trial) to that great pattern of patience: I find it no more, and tremble at these I find.

But besides the dreadfulnefs of the judgment itself, who can but shudder at the thought of the suddenness of this destruction; which sweeps away both body and soul in an unprepared and unrepentant state; so as that this fire should but begin a worse; this heavenly flame should but kindle that of hell!

Thus inconceivably heavy was the revenge: but what was the offence? We have learned not to think any indignity light, that is offered to the Son of God; but we know these spiritual affronts are capable of degrees. Had these Samaritans reviled Christ, and his attendants; had they violently assaulted him; had they followed him with stones in their hands, and blasphemies in their mouths, it had been a just provocation of so horrible a vengeance. Now the wrong was only negative, they received him

him not; and that not out of any particular grudge or dislike of his person, but of his nation only; the men had been welcome, had not their country disgusted. All the charge that I hear our Saviour give to his disciples, in case of their rejection, is, "If they receive you not, shake off the dust of your feet;" yet this was amongst their own, and when they went on that sacred errand of publishing the gospel of peace. These were strangers from the commonwealth of Israel; this measure was not to preachers, but to travellers; only a mere inhospitality to disliked guests: yet, no less revenge will serve them, than fire from heaven.

I dare say for you, ye holy sons of Zebedee, it was not your spleen, but your zeal, that was guilty of so bloody a suggestion; your indignation could not but be stirred to see the great Prophet and Saviour of the world so unkindly repelled; yet all this will not excuse you from a rash cruelty, from an inordinate rage.

Even the best heart may easily be misguided with a well meant zeal: and no affection is either more necessary, or better accepted. Love to any object cannot be severed from hatred of the contrary; whence it is that all creatures, which have the concupiscible part, have also the irascible adjoined to it; anger and displeasure is not so much an enemy, as a guardian and champion of love: whoever therefore is rightly affected to his Saviour, cannot but find much regret at his wrongs. Oh gracious and divine zeal, the kindly warmth, and vital temper of piety, whither hast thou withdrawn thyself from the cold hearts of men? Or is this according to the just constitution of the old and decrepit age of the world, into which we are fallen? How many are there that think there is no wisdom but in a dull indifference! and choose rather to freeze, than burn! How quick and apprehensive are men in cases of their own indignities, how insensible to those of their Saviour!

But, there is nothing so ill as the corruption of the best; rectified zeal is not more commendable and useful than inordinate and misguided is hateful and dangerous. Fire is a necessary and beneficial element; but if it be once misplaced, and have caught upon the beams of our houses, or stacks of our corn, nothing can be more dreadful.

Thus, sometimes zeal turns into murder ("They that kill you shall think they do God service"); sometimes into frenzy; sometimes, rude indiscretion: wholesome and blessed is that zeal that is well grounded, and well governed; grounded upon the word of truth, not upon unstable fancies: governed by wisdom and charity; wisdom, to avoid rashness and excess; charity, to avoid just offence.

No evil motion can want a pretence. Elias did so; why not we? He was an holy prophet; the occasion, the place gives no warrant: there, wrong was offered to a servant, here to his master; there to a man, here to a God and man; if Elias then did it, why not we? There is nothing more perilous than to draw all the actions of holy men into examples: for, as the best men have their weaknesses; so they are not privileged from doing unjustifiable actions; besides that, they may have had perhaps peculiar warrants, signed from heaven, whether by instinct, or special command, which we may expect in vain. There must be much caution used in our imitation of the best patterns, whether in respect of the persons, or things; else we shall make ourselves apes, and our acts sinful absurdities.

It is for our Saviour to find fault with the errors of zeal; even where sensible weaknesses have appeared. If Moses, in sacred rage and indignation, break the tables written with God's own hand, I do not find him checked for it. Here our meek Saviour turns back and frowns upon his furious suitors, and tells them quite roundly, "Ye know not of what spirit ye are." The faults of uncharitableness cannot be swallowed up in zeal: if there were any colour to hide the blemishes of this evil disposition, it should be this crimson dye. But he that needs not our lye, will let us know he needs not our injury; and hates to have a good cause supported by the violation of our charity. We have no reason to disclaim our passions; even the Son of God chides sometimes, and that where he loves; it gives no offence that our affections are moved, but that they are inordinate.

It was a sharp reproof: "Ye know not of what spirit ye are;" another man would not perhaps have felt it; a disciple does; tender hearts are galled with that which the carnal mind flights. The spirit of Elias was that which they meant to assume and imitate; but they were given to understand that they had mistaken their work. How would they have scorned to think that any other but God's Spirit had stirred them up to this passionate motion! Now they discover, that it was wrought by that wicked spirit whom they professed to hate.

It is far from the good Spirit of God to stir up any man to private revenge; or thirst of blood: not an eagle, but a dove, was the shape wherein he chose to appear: neither wouldst thou, O God, be in the whirlwind, or in the fire, but in the soft voice: Oh Saviour, why do we seek for any precedent but thine, whose name we challenge? "Thou camest to thine own, thine own received thee not." Didst thou call for fire from heaven upon them? didst thou not rather send down water from thy compassionate eyes and weep for them, by whom thou must bleed? Better had it been for us never to have had any spirit, than any but thine; we can be no other than wicked, if our mercies be cruelty.

But is it the name of Elias, O ye zealots, which ye pretend for a colour of your impotent desire? Ye do not consider the difference betwixt his spirit, and yours; his was extraordinary and heroical, besides the instinct, or secret command of God for this act of his; far otherwise is it with you, who by a carnal distemper are moved to this furious suggestion. They who would imitate God's saints in extraordinary actions, must see they go upon the same grounds. Without the same spirit, and the same warrant, it is either a mockery or a sin to make them our copies. Elias is no fit pattern for disciples, but their Master: "The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

Then are our actions and intentions warrantable and praise-worthy, when they coincide with his. Oh Saviour, when we look into those sacred acts and monuments of thine, we find many a life which thou preservedst from perishing; some that had perished, by thee recalled; never any by thee destroyed; only one poor fig-tree (as the real emblem of thy severity to the unfruitful) was blasted and withered by thy curse; but to man, how unweariedly favourable and indulgent wast thou! So repelled as thou wert, so reviled, so persecuted, laid in wait for, sold, betrayed, apprehended, arraigned, condemned, crucified: yet what one man didst thou strike dead for these heinous indignities? Yea, when one of thine enemies lost but an ear in that woful quarrel, thou gavest that ear to him who came to take life from thee. I find some whom thou didst scourge and correct, as the sacrilegious money-changers; none whom thou killedst. Not that thou either lovest not, or requirest not, the due and severe execution of justice; for whose sword is it that princes bear, but thine? Offenders must smart and bleed: This is a just sequel, but not the intention of thy coming; it is thy will, not thy drift.

About this time, our Lord was met by one who intimated his desire to go along with him, but requested that he might first of all attend his aged father till he should die, that he might discharge the last duty to him. This our Saviour would not permit, but answers him, "Let the dead" (that is, worldly men, that are thus spiritually dead in trespasses and sins (see 1 Tim. v. 6.), and are without hope and care of another life), "bury their dead" (such persons being sufficient for such a work); "but go thou forthwith, and preach the Gospel." Yet our Saviour does not intimate hereby, that it was unlawful to solemnize the funerals of our deceased friends (which the saints of old did, as Abraham for Sarah, Joseph for Jacob, &c.); but he shews, that when he calls to his service, no pretences or excuses must then be used, to hinder any from immediately following him; and that the advancement of God's glory in preaching the gospel, and saving of souls, is to be preferred before that office and duty, though at another time and in itself commendable.

There was another person also that promised to follow him, but desired he would permit him first to go home, order and dispose of his estate and family, and take leave of his friends and domestics. (We have a like instance in Eliha, who desired to go to take his leave of his father and mother, before he followed Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 20.) Our Saviour answers, that as he that holds the plough must follow it close, and not look backward, if he intends to make strait furrows, and good work of it; so neither must he make errands home, or betake himself to any other business, till his day's work be done; if he do, he will not be fit for that employment: in like manner, if this man would undertake his service, he must not procrastinate, or defer, but presently set about it without delay, and then follow it with due diligence: but that if he had any such superior attachment to any thing he had left at home, as thereby to be taken off from his service, he was not worthy of the dignity and honour of being his disciple, or to be employed in that great and glorious work of preaching the gospel.

Christ having chosen, out of those who had heard and followed him, seventy persons, he sendeth them out by two and two into every city and place, where he himself meant to come. He had sent out his twelve apostles some time before; and their commission was, to go at large to any of the cities of Israel: but these seventy were to go to those places particularly, which Christ himself intended to visit, that they might make way for him, proclaiming him beforehand, and preaching in his name, that, he afterwards coming in person, and shewing himself, by his doctrine and miracles, to be the Messiah, the people might more readily receive him for such, and believe on him.

First, Christ represents to them the great multitudes who were ready to receive the gospel, if it were faithfully preached to them, but there was but a small number of faithful preachers; he therefore exhorts them to pray, that God would send forth more labourers into his harvest, Luke x. ver. 2.

Secondly, He forewarns them of the dangers and ill usage they must expect to meet with in the discharge of their office, ver. 3.

Thirdly, He gives them nearly the same instructions that he had given before to the twelve apostles: particularly,

1. To make no provision for their journey beforehand, of money, victuals, or change of apparel, or carry such with them, but to cast themselves on his providence.

2. As they went, to spend no time in civilities with any, nor to be drawn aside from their business by offices of friendship, as visiting their acquaintance or kindred, &c. ver. 4.

3. Whatsoever house they entered into, they should pray for all peace, prosperity and salvation to it. And if there be any person there, disposed to receive the gospel of peace, and capable of that blessing, their peace should rest upon him, ver. 5, 6.

4. That they should not remove from one house to another in the same city, but content themselves with such entertainment as they found, and take it without scruple: for they that labour in the gospel, are worthy to be provided for by those to whom they preach, ver. 7, 8. (see also 1 Cor. ix. 7. 1 Tim. v. 18, 19).

5. He commands them to proclaim that the Messiah was come in the flesh, and had begun to exercise his spiritual kingdom and government among men (called the kingdom of God, or God's spiritual government in his church, established by the Messiah; because assigned to Christ, who is God as well as man): and that the clear and full manifestation thereof now approached, inasmuch as the Messiah himself would shortly come among them in person. And for confirmation of their doctrine, he gives them power to heal the sick, ver. 9.

6. He enjoins them to shake off the dust of their feet against those cities that refused to receive them, as a testimony against them; and he declares, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment, than for those cities.

Fourthly, He upbraids Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, as high contemners of the gospel, they having had the most frequent tenders of it, and yet despised it.

Lastly, He declares, that they who reject and despise them, do likewise reject and despise him, and God the Father also that sent him; from ver. 13, to 17.

Our Saviour is now come up to the feast of tabernacles, from which to the next passover (on which he suffered) was the last half year of his publick ministry. During the three first days of the feast, the multitude had been inquiring after him, and had expressed their different opinions of him: some charitably allowing him the character of being a good man; others traducing him, as being a deceiver; but they that spake well of him durst not do it openly, for fear of the chief men among the Jews, who they knew were greatly disaffected to him. About the middle of the feast, he appeared and taught publicly in the temple; and though John doth not express what he taught at this time, yet from ver. 15. it appears, that his doctrine was admirable; and that the Jews marvelled how he should come to know the sacred scriptures and divine mysteries, considering the meanness of his education. In answer to whom, our Saviour,

1. Vindicates his doctrine, as not devised of himself, as man (as they only conceived him to be), but communicated to him of his Father, whose embassador and great Prophet he was; foretold, Deut. xviii. 18. "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him;" and so speak not his own mind only, but his Father's: for, as he was God equal with the Father, so he naturally knows all his counsels; and as man, had knowledge thereof by communication from the Godhead, ver. 16.

2. Lest they should find a difficulty in believing him, asserting his doctrine to be of God, he subjoins two rules, whereby they might try doctrines and teachers. The first whereof relates to the person who would try doctrines, ver. 17. and requires that he be a holy man, and, according to his light and knowledge, one that walks in God's ways. The second relates to the person and doctrine that is to be tried, ver. 18. wherein he shews, that a man who runs unsent, and preaches his own inventions, doth usually in his carriage, and by his doctrine, seek to exalt himself; whereas he who is sent of God, seeks to exalt God only, and the nature of his doctrine tends to that end; and that will evidence him to be a preacher of truth, and that there is no unrighteousness or fraud in what he delivers. This was eminently true in the doctrine of our Saviour, the nature and scope whereof tended to glorify his Father, and not to advance his own private glory.

3. Having thus vindicated his doctrine, he comes now to vindicate his practice, in healing the impotent man on the sabbath-day, which had so long stuck in their minds, as a violation of the sabbath, and the law of Moses. And, first, he shews that they were no fit persons to challenge him for breach of the law, who were so ready to violate it themselves, as appeared by their going about to kill him, who was a person wholly innocent (against the express letter of the sixth commandment), ver. 19. Here the multitude, who were ignorant of the plots and designs of their rulers (which some others knew better, ver. 25.) cry out, he was mad, or possessed with an evil spirit, to apprehend any such thing, ver. 20. But our meek Saviour, passing over this calumny without a reply, goes on with his discourse, wherein he shews what was the ground of the quarrel which the Jews had against him; namely, for healing the impotent man that lay at the pool of Bethesda, on the sabbath-day; which action he justifies (not, as before, from the example of his Father, but) from their own practice in circumcising a child according to the law given by Moses (which he received from Abraham, Isaac, and the fathers ancients than himself) on the sabbath-day, if that proved to be the eighth day, the day of circumcision, Lev. xii. 3. Now if circumcision might be administered on the sabbath-day, which is a servile kind of work, and requires some medicinal surgery, they had no reason to be angry at him for healing a man both in soul and body on the sabbath, and that with a word of his mouth only.

only. Therefore he bids them judge righteously, and compare the one fact with the other, ver. 21, 22, 23, 24.

4. Having thus vindicated both his doctrine and practice, some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem (who, it seems, knew the plots of their rulers better than others), begin to express their wonder why they did not apprehend him, seeing he appeared so publicly; and, questioning among themselves, whether it proceeded not from hence, that they were convinced he was the Christ, at length they answer themselves, that that was not likely; for they knew whence this man is; whereas no man will know whence the Messiah is, when he cometh. In this they assert a manifest untruth; for although Christ, in respect of his Godhead, was prefigured by Melchizedek, of whose father or mother, or pedigree, or birth, or death, there is no mention in the Scripture, Heb. vii. 3. and in that respect it is also said of him, "Who shall declare his generation?" Isa. liii. 8. yet it is clear, that, in respect of his humanity, the Scripture plainly points out of what tribe he should come, of what family and lineage, and the place of his birth, ver. 25, 26, 27. Our Saviour therefore in his reply declares, that though they knew him as man, where he was born, and of what family and mother, yet they knew not his divine nature, nor the Father, from whom he was by eternal generation, and who had sent him into the world, and who is true and faithful in all his promises, ver. 28, 29.

Some of the multitude, being enraged at these words, had a mind to lay hold on him immediately; but providence restrained them for the present, because his time to suffer was not yet come: but others believed on him, as being convinced by the wonderful miracles he had wrought among them, that he was the Messiah; which thing coming to the Pharisees' ears, they with the chief priests, who were the heads of the twenty-four courses or orders of priests, of which we read in 1 Chron. xxiv. send some officers to apprehend him, ver. 30, 31, 32. Our Saviour hereupon declares, that he should stay with them but a little while, and then he should go to him that sent him; and when he was ascended to the Father, many of them, in those great distresses and calamities that should come upon them, would wish for his bodily presence again, but then should not have it [see chap. xiii. 33.] ver. 33, 34. The Jews, not understanding these words, reasoned among themselves, whether, by leaving them, he meant to betake himself to the Gentiles or Greeks, dispersed up and down in the world, and teach them; and they captiously agitating these things among themselves, without seeking information from him, he leaveth them in suspense, ver. 35, 36.

Fifthly, on the last day of the feast (namely, the eighth, which, as well as the first, was to be kept holy with religious assemblies and sacrifices, Levit. xxiii. 36.) the people being next day to depart, he preaches again, and the subject-matter of his sermon was an invitation to all spiritually-thirsty souls to come unto him, in allusion possibly to Isa. lv. 1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters."—He shews, that to come unto him, is to believe in him; and to such he promises to give the graces and gifts of his holy Spirit, which shall not only refresh them, but shall flow forth also out of their hearts, and inward parts, for the good and refreshing of others also, as the scripture hath in many places intimated [as Isa. xlv. 3. and lxviii. 11. Joel ii. 28. see also John iv. 14.]: and to this sense the evangelist himself interprets this saying of Christ, as belonging to the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, Acts. ii. for that more plentiful effusion of the Spirit was deferred till the ascension and glorification of Christ, the head of his church, ver. 37, 38, 39.

Some of his hearers are so affected at this sermon, that they acknowledge him to be the great Prophet promised to Israel, Deut. xviii. 18. whom they understood to be a different person from the Messiah. Others confess him to be the Christ: others oppose it, as not knowing him to be born at Bethlehem: and upon this diversity of opinions, there ariseth a division among them; and some had a mind to apprehend him, but by the over-ruling providence of God were, for the present, restrained from doing it, ver. 40, 41, 42, 43, 44.

Then the officers of the sanhedrin, who were sent by them to apprehend him (as in ver. 32.) came back without him; and, being demanded why they had not taken him, they

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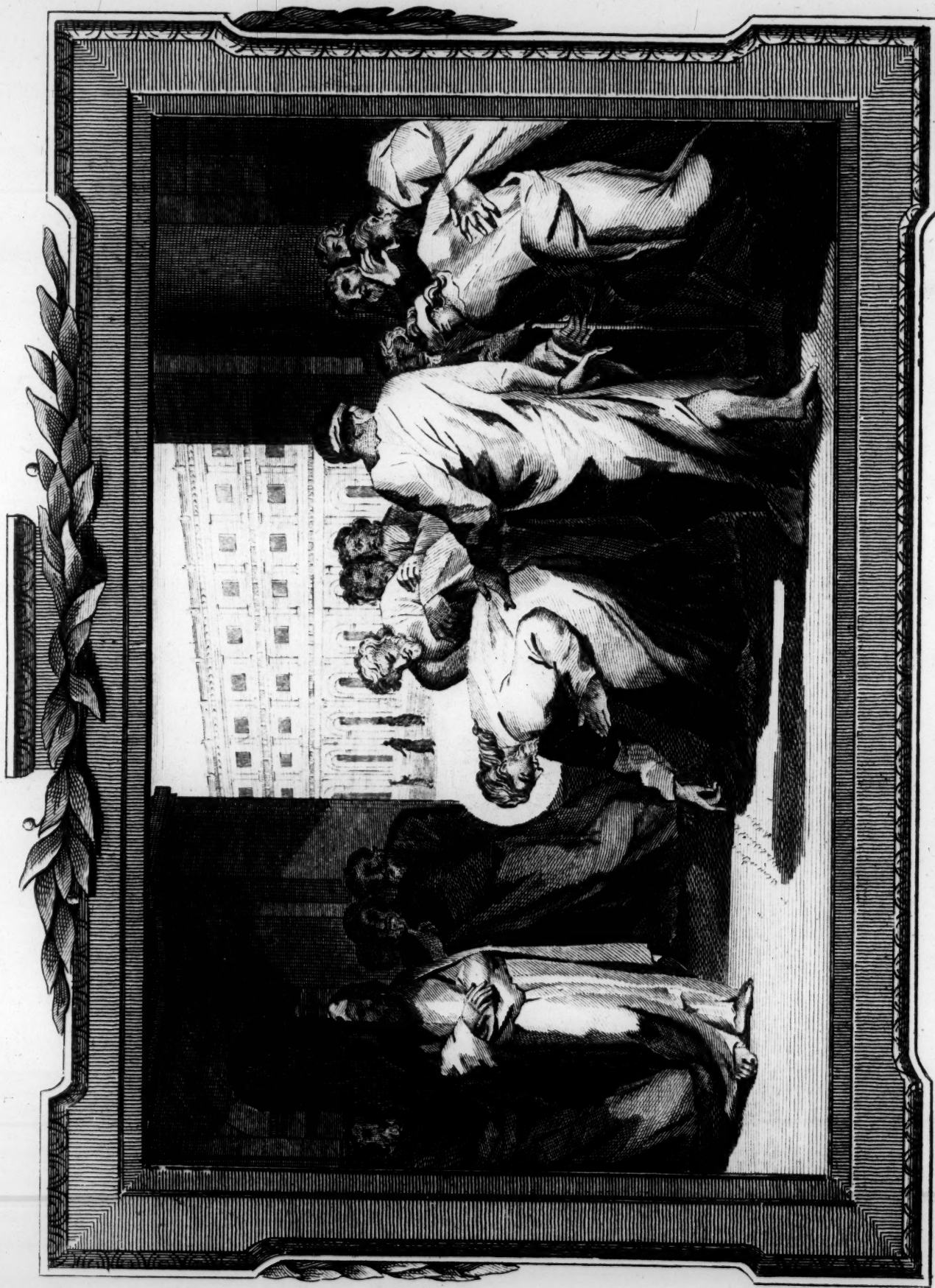
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CHRIST delivers the WOMAN taken in ADULTERY.

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they answer, "Never man spake like this man." The Pharisees being more enraged at this their reason, than at the neglect of their office, upbraid them with suffering themselves to be so deceived; whereas none of the grandees, or learned rabbies, had owned him; only an accursed crew of ignorant people doated on him, ver. 45. to 50. While they are thus chiding their officers, Nicodemus, one of their number, though he did not yet openly own Christ, yet pleads that he may not be condemned before he is heard. They answer this rational plea of his with a taunt: "Art thou also of Galilee?" that is, a favourer and disciple of this Galilean? They supposed Christ came out of Galilee, whereas he was born in Bethlehem; and they affirmed, that no prophet had hitherto arisen out of Galilee, and presumed that none ever should, notwithstanding Isaiah had prophesied, that the Messiah should begin to preach in Galilee, as may appear from Isa. ix. 1. compared with Mat. iv. 15. But though they were thus more and more enraged, yet they part without concluding any thing for that time against him (ver. 50, to the end).

Jesus having betaken himself this evening to the Mount of Olives, that he might be private, and have a fit opportunity for prayer [see Luke xxi. 37. and xxii. 39, 40.] And from thence going, it is probable, to Bethany, and lodging in the house of Lazarus, the next morning early he comes to the temple again: and as he sat teaching the people, the Scribes and Pharisees bring a woman to him, taken in the act of adultery; and ask his judgment concerning her, with an intent to ensnare him.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS.

Methinks I see this miserable adulteress, how she stands confounded, amidst that gazing and disdainful multitude; how she hides her head, how she wipes her sorrowful face, and weeping eyes; in the mean time, it is no dumb-show that is here acted by these Scribes and Pharisees; they step forth boldly to her accusation; "Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act:" how plausibly do they begin! Had I stood by and seen them, should I not have said, What holy, honest, conscientious men are these! what devout servants of Christ! with what reverence they come to him, with what zeal for justice! when he that made, and ransacks their bosoms, tells me, All this is done but to tempt him. Even the falsest hearts will have the plausiblest mouths; like to Solomon's harlot; "Their lips drop as an honey-comb, and their mouth is smoother than oil, but their end is bitter as wormwood." False and hollow Pharisees! he is your master whom ye serve, not he whom ye tempt: only in this shall he be approved your Master, that he shall pay your wages, and give you your portion with hypocrites.

The act of adultery was her crime; to be taken in the very act was no part of her sin, but the proof of her just conviction; yet her detection is made an aggravation of her shame, such is the corrupt judgment of the world; to do ill troubles not men, but to be taken in doing it; unknown filthiness passes away with ease; it is the notice that perplexes them, not the guilt. But, O foolish sinners, all your cunning and secrecy cannot so contrive it, but that ye shall be taken in the manner; your conscience takes you so; the God of Heaven takes you so; and ye shall once find, that your conscience is more than a thousand witnesses, and God more than a thousand consciences.

They who complain of the act, urge the punishment; "Now Moses in the law commanded that such should be stoned:" where did Moses enjoin this? surely the particularity of this execution was urged without book; tradition and custom enacted it, not the law.

Indeed Moses commanded death to both the offenders, not the manner of death to either. By analogy it holds thus: it is flatly commanded, in the case of a damsel betrothed to an husband, and found not to be a virgin; in the case of a damsel betrothed, who being defiled in the city, cried not; tradition and custom made up the rest; obtaining, out of this ground, that all adulterers should be executed by lapidation or stoning:

stoning: the more ancient punishment was burning; death always, though in divers forms. I blush to think that Christians should slight that sin which both Jews and Pagans held to be capital.

How captious a word is this! Moses said thus, what sayest thou? If they be not sure that Moses said so, why do they affirm it? and if they be sure, why do they question that which they know he has decided? They would not have desired a better advantage, than a contradiction to that received law-giver. It is their profession, "We are Moses' disciples;" and, "We know that God spake to Moses;" it had been offence enough to oppose so known a prophet. Still I find it the drift of the enemies of truth to set Christ and Moses together by the ears; in the matter of the Sabbath, of circumcision, of marriage, and divorce, of the use of the law, of justification by the law, of the sense and extent of the law, and where not? But they shall never be able to effect it; they two are fast and indissoluble friends on both parts for ever; each speaks for the other, each establishes the other; they are subordinate, they cannot be opposite; Moses was faithful as a servant, Christ as a son. A faithful servant cannot but be obedient to the son: The true use we make of Moses, is, to be our schoolmaster to teach us, to whip us to Christ: the true use we make of Christ, is, to supply Moses; "By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses:" thus must we hold in with both, if we will have our part in either; so shall Moses bring us to Christ, and Christ to glory.

Had these Pharisees out of simplicity, and desire of information, in a case of doubt, moved this question to our Saviour, it had been no less commendable, than now it is blameworthy. But, here, it was far otherwise; they came not to learn, but to tempt; and to tempt, that they might accuse, like their father the devil, who solicits to sin, that he may plead against us for yielding. Fain would these colloquing adversaries draw Christ to contradict Moses, that they might take advantage of his contradiction.

On one side, they saw his readiness to tax the false glosses which their presumptuous doctors had put upon the law; with an, "I say unto you:" on the other, they saw his inclination to mercy and compassion in all his actions; so far as to neglect even some circumstances of the law; as to touch the leper, to heal on the sabbath, to eat with known sinners, to dismiss an infamous (but penitent) offender, to select and countenance two noted publicans; and hereupon they might perhaps think that his compassion might draw him to transgress this Mosaic institution.

What a crafty bait is here laid for our Saviour! Such as he cannot bite at, and not be taken: it seems to them impossible he should avoid a deep prejudice either to his justice or mercy. For thus they imagine; either Christ will second Moses in sentencing this woman to death; or else he will contradict Moses in dismissing her unpunished: if he command her to be stoned, he loses the honour of his clemency and mercy; if he appoint her dismissal, he loses the honour of his justice: indeed, strip him of either of these, and he can be no Saviour.

Oh the cunning folly of vain men that hope to beguile wisdom itself! Silence and neglect shall first confound those men, whom his answer will afterwards send away convicted. Instead of opening his mouth, our Saviour bows his body; and instead of returning words from his lips, writes characters on the ground with his finger. O Saviour, I had rather silently wonder at thy gesture, than inquire curiously into the words thou didst write, or the mysteries of thus writing; only herein I see thou meanest to shew a disregard to these malicious and busy cavillers. Sometimes taciturnity and contempt are the best answers; thou that hast bidden us be wise as serpents, givest us this noble example of thy prudence. It was most safe that these tempters should be thus kept fasting with a silent disrespect, that their eagerness might justly draw upon them an ensuing shame.

The more unwillingness they saw in Christ to give his answer, the more pressing and importunate they were to draw it from him: now, as if forced by their so zealous irritation, our Saviour raises himself up, and gives it them home, with a reprehensory and stinging satisfaction; "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her:" as if his very action had said; I was loth to shame you: and therefore could have been willing

willing not to have heard your ill-meant notion; but since you will needs have it, and by your vehemence force my justice, I must tell you, there is not one of you but is as faulty as she whom ye accuse; there is no difference, but that your sin is smothered in secrecy, hers is brought forth into the light; ye had more need to make your own peace by an humble repentance, than to urge severity against another; I deny not but Moses hath justly from God imposed the penalty of death upon such heinous offences, but what then would become of you? If death be her due, yet not by those your unclean hands; your hearts know you are not honest enough to accuse.

Lo, not the bird, but the fowler is taken: he says not, 'Let her be stoned,' this had been against the course of his mercy; he says not, 'Let her not be stoned;' this had been against the law of Moses; but he so answers, that both his justice and mercy are intire; she is dismissed, and they are put to shame.

It was the manner of the Jews, to those heinous crimes that were punished with stoning, that the witnesses and accusers should be the first to lay hands upon the guilty; well doth our Saviour, therefore, choak these accusers with the consciousness of their so foul incompetency; with what face, with what heart, could they stone their own sin in another person?

Honestly is too mean a term; these Scribes and Pharisees were noted for extraordinary and admired holiness; the outside of their lives was not only inoffensive, but saint-like, and exemplary; yet that all-seeing eye of the Son of God, which found folly in the angels, hath much more found wickedness in these glorious professors. It is not for nothing that his eyes are like a flame of fire; what secret is there which he searches not? Retire then, O ye foolish sinners, into your inmost closets, yea (if ye can) into the center of the earth, his eye follows you, and observes all your conduct; no bolt, no bar, no darkness, can keep him out: no thief was ever so impudent as to steal in the very face of the judge. O God, let me see myself seen by thee, and I shall not dare to offend!

Besides notice, here is an upbraiding accusation. These men's sins, as they had been secret, so they were forgotten: it is long since they were done; neither did they think to have heard any more news of them; and now, when time and security had quite worn them out of thought, he that shall once be their judge, calls them to a reckoning for past offences.

One time or other will that just God lay our sins in our dish; and make us possess the sins of our youth; "These things thou didst, and I kept silence, and thou thoughtest I was like thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thee." The penitent man's sin lies before him for his humiliation; the impenitent's sins are set before him for his shame and confusion.

The act of sin is transient, not so the guilt; that will stick by us, and return upon us, either in the height of our security or the depth of our misery, when we shall be least able to bear it. How justly may God take us at advantage, and then lay his arrest upon us when we are as it were imprisoned upon a former suit!

It is but just there should be a requisition of innocence in them that prosecute the vices of others. The offender is worthy of stoning, but who shall cast them? how ill would they become hands as guilty as her own! What do they but smite themselves, who punish their own offences in other men! Nothing is more unjust or absurd, than for the beam to censure the mote; the oven to upbraid the kiln; it is a false and misguided zeal that begins not first at home.

Well did our Saviour know how bitter and strong a pill he had given to these false self-righteous men; and now he takes occasion to see how it wrought; while therefore he gives them time to swallow and digest it, he returns to his old method of a seeming inadvertency. How sped the recipe?

I did not see any one of them stand out with Christ, and plead his own innocence; and yet these men (which is very remarkable) placed the fulfilling or violation of the law only in the outward act; their hearts misgave them; that if they should have stood out in a contest with Christ, he would have utterly shamed them, by displaying their old and secret sins; and have so convinced them, by undeniable circumstances, that they would never have

have wiped off the reproach: "And therefore when they heard it, being convicted by their own consciences, they went out one by one; beginning at the eldest even unto the last."

There might seem to be some kind of mannerly order in this guilty departure: not all at once, lest they should seem chased away by this charge of Christ; now their flinking away, one by one, may seem to carry a shew of deliberate or voluntary retreat: the eldest first; the ancients are fitter to give than take example: and the younger could think it no shame to follow the steps of a grave foreman and leader.

Oh wonderful power of conscience! Man can no more stand out against it, than it can against God; the Almighty, whose substitute is placed in our bosom, sets it on work to accuse. There is no denying when that says we are guilty; when that condemns us, we are in vain acquitted by the world; with what boldness did these hypocrites come to set upon Christ! with what triumph did they insult that guilty soul! Now they are thunderstruck with their consciences; and drop away confounded; and happy is he that can run away farthest from his own shame. No wicked man needs to seek out of himself for a judge, accuser, witness, or tormentor.

No sooner do these hypocrites hear of their sins from the mouth of Christ, than they are gone. Had they been sincerely touched with a true remorse, they would have rather come to him upon their knees; and have said, Lord, we know and find that thou knowest our secret sins; this argues thy divine omniscience; thou that art able to know our sins, art able to remit them. Oh pardon the iniquities of thy servants; thou that accusest us, do thou also acquit us: but now, instead hereof, they turn their backs upon their Saviour, and haste away.

An impenitent man cares not how little he hath either of the presence of God, or of the mention of his sins. Oh fools, if ye could run away from God, it were somewhat; but while ye move in him, what do ye? whither go ye? Ye may run from his mercy; ye cannot but run upon his judgment.

Christ is left alone; alone in respect of these complainants; not alone in respect of the multitude. There yet stands the mournful adulteress; she might have gone forth with them; nobody constrained her to stay; but, that which sent them away, detained her; conscience: she knew her guiltiness was publicly attested, and durst not be by herself denied; as one that was therefore fastened there by her own guilty heart, she stirs not till she may receive a dismissal.

Our Saviour was not so busy in writing, but that he read, mean time, the guilt and absence of those accusers; he that knew what they had done, knew no less what they did, what they would do; yet, as if the matter had been strange to him, he lifts himself up, and says, "Woman, where are thy accusers?"

What a happy circumstance for this sinner, to be left there! Could she be in a safer place than before the tribunal of a Saviour? Might she have chosen her refuge, whither should she rather have fled? Oh happy we, if, when we are convinced in ourselves of our sins, we can set ourselves before that Judge who is our surety, our advocate, our redeemer, our ransom, our peace!

Doubtless she stood wavering betwixt hope and fear; hope, in that she saw her accusers gone; fear, in that she knew what she had deserved; and now, while she trembles in expectation of a sentence, she hears, "Woman, where are thy accusers?" Herein our Saviour intends the satisfaction of all the hearers, of all the beholders; that they might apprehend the guiltiness, and therefore the unfitness of the accusers; and might well see there was no warrantable ground of his farther proceeding against her.

Two things are necessary for the execution of a malefactor; evidence and sentence; the one from witnesses; the other from the judge: our Saviour asks for both. The accusation and proof must draw on the sentence; the sentence must proceed upon the evidence of the proof, "Where are thy accusers? hath no man condemned thee?" Had sentence passed legally upon the adulteress, doubtless our Saviour would not have acquitted her; for as he would not intrude upon the offices of others, so he would not infringe upon

upon or violate the justice done by others; but now, finding the coast clear, he says, "Neither do I condemn thee."

After this interruption Christ returns to instruct the people in the treasury of the temple, which occasions many debates and discourses between him and the Pharisees: and,

1. Taking occasion, it seems, from the sun's bright shining in the morning, he declares himself the true Sun of Righteousness, and the Light of the World, offering to all those who will follow him, present light to guide them, so that they shall not walk in the darkness of error and sin, and this light shall also lead them to eternal life, ver. 12.

The Pharisees except against this his testimony of himself; which though he waved (chap. v. 31.) that he might bring in the many other witnesses that testified for him; yet here he asserts that his testimony is true, though he bore witness of himself, because he came from God, and was to return to him again; and, being certain of this, he might assert it; though they, being ignorant of it, carped at it, ver. 13, 14, then he tells them, that through their ignorance it was that they judged so carnally of him, and according to outward appearance, whereas he pronounced and judged of no man as they did, viz. according to outward shew, ver. 15.; yet he declares he might judge them if he would, and if he did not only bear witness of himself, but testified against them also, his testimony was true, because he is not alone in what he doth, but his Father is with him, and concurs with him in judging and testifying; and the law decrees, Deut. xvii. 6. that two concurrent witnesses shall be enough to confirm any thing for truth in judgment: therefore much more is his record true, being attested by himself who is God, and by the Father also, who by a voice from heaven, and by mighty signs and wonders, declared and confirmed who he was, and commanded he should be hearkened to and obeyed, ver. 16, 17, 18.

They hearing him speak thus of his Father, ask, "Where is thy Father?" Christ answers, that if they knew him, according to his divine nature, they would know he had an eternal Father; but they were ignorant both of the Father and of him; and ignorant of the Father, because they knew not him, in whom (clothed with our flesh) the Father was pleased, in a gracious condescension, to manifest and reveal himself, since his divine essence could not be comprehended by man. These things he spake boldly with undaunted constancy among them all, yet no man laid hands on him, because the time appointed for his suffering was not yet come, ver. 19, 20.

2. Our Saviour, perceiving they still persisted in their wicked purpose to take him, though as yet they were restrained from it by the over-ruling power and providence of God, tells them, that ere long he should leave them, and go to heaven, and then they should seek him, when calamity was come upon them, but should, for their obstinate unbelief, be excluded from any access to him. The Jews, not understanding to what his speech alluded, said among themselves, What? "Will he kill himself?" to avoid being taken and put to death by our rulers? ver. 22. Christ goes on, with his discourse, and shews, that he and they were of very contrary originals: they were earthly and carnal, men of carnal affections, and therefore apprehended not the heavenly things he taught them. But he, though he had taken our nature, yet had no communion with sin, or the corruptions of flesh and blood, and was the true Messiah, whom if they embraced not by faith, they should die in their sins, ver. 23, 24. The Jews hearing him lay such an absolute necessity upon them to believe in him, asked him, Who he was? Before he gives them an answer to that question (which he does afterwards, ver. 42, and 54), he first shews that he hath many things to reprehend in them, as particularly their infidelity and rejecting his doctrine, notwithstanding he taught nothing but what he received from "him that sent him," who is true and faithful, ver. 25, 26.

They understanding not that he spake of the Father, when he mentioned "him that sent him," he further certifies them, that though now they were ignorant, yet after they had with wicked hands crucified him, John iii. 14, and xii. 33. then they shall be made to know that he is the Messiah; that he doth all things according to his Father's will, and

that the Father is always present with him, and that he doth those things which he hath appointed, and which are pleasing to him, ver. 27, 28, 29.

3. Having now by his doctrine won some (even from among the crew of opposers) to believe on him, he exhorts them to perseverance, and to continue in faith and obedience to his doctrine, promising that thereby, 1. They shall prove themselves to be among the number of his real disciples. 2. That they shall increase in knowledge of the truth, and in feeling the power and efficacy thereof. 3. That they shall be made partakers of true christian liberty, ver. 30, 31, 32.

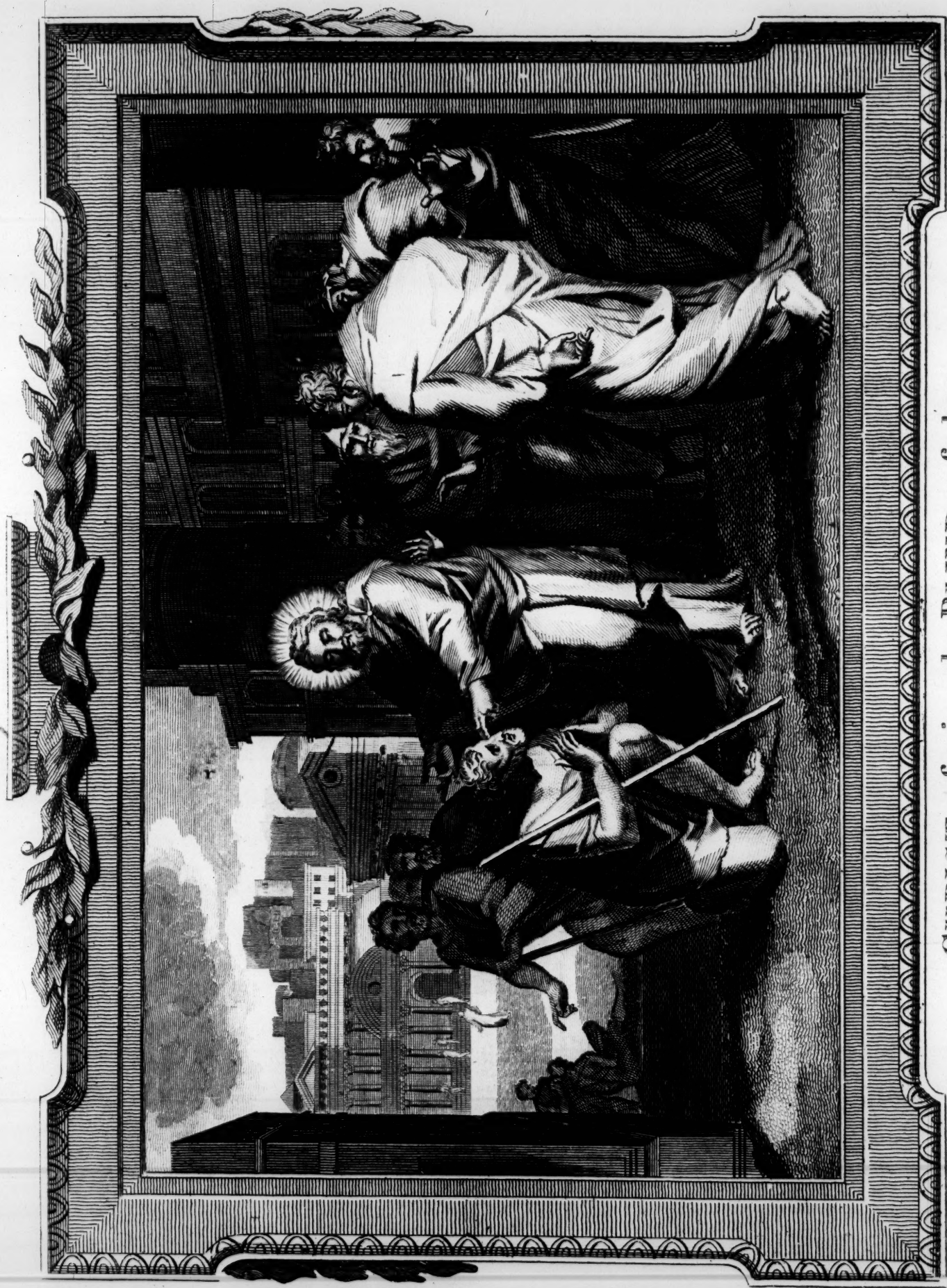
Here some of the Jews (not those who believed in him, but others) alledge that they, being Abraham's children, and having never been in bondage to any (forgetting, it seems their Egyptian and Babylonish bondage, and that they were at this very time under the power of the Romans), it was needless to feed them with hopes of being made free, ver. 33. Christ answers, that the freedom he spake of, was not an outward, but a spiritual freedom, namely, from the servitude and cruel bondage of sin, wherein all they are held who give up themselves to a trade or course of sinning; and although such as were slaves in this respect, might enjoy the external privileges of the church for a season (as a servant that is to be dismissed, abides in his master's house for a time), yet they would be cast out at length, and separated from him, who is the natural Son of the Most High, and from all the children of God for ever. The only way, therefore, to attain true freedom, is to come to him, and to believe in him; for he, being heir of the family, hath power to make free what servants he pleases; and none can ever partake of spiritual liberty, but they who flee to him, and receive it from him, ver. 34, 35, 36. And as for them, he acknowledges they were Abraham's seed, according to the flesh, but that would not avail them, seeing they did not tread in Abraham's steps, but sought to kill him, who was the Christ; which was a clear evidence that his doctrine had no place in them; and yet the word they despised, was the doctrine he had heard and learned of the Father, which Abraham would never have rejected as they did; and therefore their carriage proved they had another father whom they followed, viz. the devil, and did that which they had learned of him, ver. 37, 38. And further to confirm what he had said, he shews, that if they were Abraham's true and genuine children, that is, according to the Spirit, they would imitate Abraham in his works, and not seek to kill the Messiah, who brings the true doctrine of salvation to them: therefore their works shewed that they belonged to another father, ver. 39, 40, 41.

Hereupon they reply, 'We are none of those to whom the style of children of whoredoms, is given, Hos. ii. 4. we were not born in an idolatrous state, but in the true church; we worship the true God, who chose us to be his peculiar people, and hath often acknowledged us for such,' (Exod. iv. 22.) "Thus saith the LORD, Israel is my Son, even my first born," ver. 41.

Our Saviour rejoins, that if they were God's children, they would love him, who is his natural Son, and is from the Father by eternal generation, and came into the world, and was incarnate, not of his own mere motion without the Father, but by being sent of the Father. And if God were their father, they would understand him, speaking from God; whereas now they were so transported with malice, they could not hear him with patience, ver. 42, 43. Then he plainly shews them, who is their spiritual father, even the devil, from their earnest following and endeavouring to execute those wicked lusts which reign in him, particularly murder, departure from the truth, opposition to the truth, lying and slander, ver. 44. for in this they imitated the devil, who hates the truth, that they would not believe him and his doctrine, even because it is truth, ver. 45. And since none of them could convince him of any sin, and his doctrine was the very truth, therefore they could not but sin heinously in not giving credit to him, ver. 46. But the true cause why they did not believe nor regard his word, was, "because they were not the children of God," ver. 47.

The Jews (being enraged at this his free reproof) fell to railing at his person, charging him with being a Samaritan, and possessed with an evil spirit, ver. 48. Christ answers their blasphemous calumny, and declares that he had no devil, but was honouring his Father





CHRIST restoring the BLIND to sight.

Father in what he did and said, and therefore it was their great sin thus to reproach him. That he was no self-seeker, nor hunter after vain-glory, nor needed he avenge himself on them, since the Father will take care of his honour, and will judge between him and them, and avenge such slanders, ver. 49, 50.

Then he goes on to shew what blessed fruits and effects shall follow upon observing his doctrine (pursuing what he had begun to speak of, ver. 31, 32, where he had been interrupted by the Jews), namely, that such persons shall never see death, that is, shall be secured from eternal misery, ver. 51. The Jews, thinking he had spoken of temporal death, look upon what he had said as a great absurdity, and tauntingly ask him, what power he assumed to himself, to bestow privileges which God never gave to Abraham, nor to the prophets whom he so highly favoured, namely, to be freed from death, ver. 52, 53. Christ, in his answer, clears himself of all ambition in this matter; and shews, that he spake not these great and glorious things of himself, out of vain-glory (as they supposed), but shews, that the power he had, he received from him whom they acknowledged for their God, and it is he that hath testified of him by the prophets, by his voice from heaven, and by many miracles, to be his Son, and the person he gave out himself for. And though they professed to know and own this true God, his Father, yet indeed they knew him not in a right manner, neither lived in obedience to him: but he had a perfect knowledge of him, and of his mind and will, and exactly observed his commands; and if he should say otherwise, that he came not from him, or knew him not, he should be a liar like unto them, ver. 54, 55.

Lastly, Because they boasted so much of Abraham, he tells them, that Abraham magnified him, in that, having received a promise that he should come of his seed [Gen. xxii. 18.] he exceedingly rejoiced to see the day of his coming in the flesh, and "he saw it afar off by the eye of faith" [Heb. xi. 13]. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them," ver. 56. To this the Jews object, that he was not fifty years old, and therefore how could he say, that Abraham lived since his birth, or that he could see Abraham, or be seen by him? ver. 57. Jesus answered, that they were much mistaken in reckoning his age; for he had a being from all eternity as God, and so before Abraham was born, ver. 58. They conceiving this speech of his blasphemous, after the manner of Zealots, were ready to stone him immediately [see Lev. xxiv. 16.], but he became, it seems, miraculously invisible, and so conveyed himself secretly from their fury, ver. 59.

Before Jesus leaves Jerufalem, he meets with a poor man on the sabbath day, that was born blind. Some of his followers asked him, whether this blindness was occasioned by any sin committed by this man (as they supposed it might) when his soul was in another body; or whether it was some sin of his parents that had drawn this evil upon him. Christ answers, that neither any sin of his own (as they fondly supposed), nor his parents' sins were the cause thereof, but God's secret wisdom, who meant to manifest his own glory, by a miraculous cure of him: and therefore he shews there was reason he should cure him, and that instantly, even on the sabbath day, though the like practice had bred him much trouble before; for having received commission and power from God to do these works, he was to exercise it during the time of his life and ministry, which was shortly to expire [see John xi. 8, 9, 10]; and to shew to the world, that he was sent to enlighten it, and to cure spiritual blindness by this visible sign of curing a man that was born blind. Then having made clay with his spittle on the dust, and anointing the man's eyes therewith, he sends him to the pool of Siloam* to wash; which he obeying, recovers his sight, (from ver. 1 to 8.)

* This pool, spoken of in Nehem. iii. 15. was fed by a fountain or spring at the foot of Mount Zion, from whence flowed out the brook of Siloah, which watered a part of the city, of which Isa. viii. 6. the name seems to be given of old, only in testimony that they accounted it a special gift, sent of God, to have a fountain among those hills so commodious for their city; or else because (as they report) the waters thereof did not constantly flow, but now-and-then, as God was pleased to send them. And so the name of the pool might put them in mind of the Messiah, who is Shiloh, Gen. xlix. 10. and the Sent of God.

The blind man, thus miraculously cured, returns with much joy to his neighbours and acquaintance, who confer among themselves, and with him, upon this matter (from ver. 8 to 13.)

These people, being much amazed at this strange thing, bring the man to the Pharisees, who they knew envied the rising glory of Christ, and had made a great stir upon the miracle wrought before by him on the sabbath day, John v. 9. The Pharisees examine the man concerning the circumstances of the fact; who relates to them the manner how it was wrought, ver. 13, 14, 15. Hereupon some of them judge Christ to be an impostor, and not sent of God, because he did these things on the sabbath day: others plead, if he were an impostor, and a great sinner, as they supposed, he could not do such miracles, which can be wrought only by the finger of God, ver. 16. And seeing they could not agree among themselves, they call the man again, to know what his thoughts of Christ were, who had done this for him. He tells them, he thinks him to be a prophet, ver. 17. They being desirous (if it were possible) to obscure the glory of this miracle, pretend they did not believe the man had been born blind, and that he had now recovered his sight, and therefore examine his parents concerning the truth of this thing, ver. 18, 19. They expressly acknowledge that he was their son, and that he was born blind; but for the way of his cure, they refer them to himself, being of age to give them an account of it; for a decree being past among the rulers, that if any confessed and owned Christ, he should be excommunicated, they were afraid, and therefore declined giving an answer to that question, ver. 20, 21, 22, 23. Then the Pharisees called the man again, and exhorted him to give glory to God by a free confession of the truth (see Josh. vii. 19.), for they could not believe that Christ (whom they took to be an impostor) could work such a miracle, ver. 24. The man replies, that let them judge of him as they pleased, yet this he was assured of, that he, being before blind, was now made to see by him, ver. 25.

The Pharisees ask him again, what he did to him? He answers, that he had told them distinctly and plainly enough before, but to little purpose; and then in derision asks them, whether they had a mind to become his disciples and followers, seeing they were so inquisitive about him, ver. 26, 27. At this being greatly enraged, they revilingly tell him that they are Moses's disciples, with whom they knew God spake; but as for Christ, they knew not whence he came, nor from whom he had his office and authority, nor knew of any commission he had from God, ver. 28, 29. The man admires that, Christ having wrought such a miracle on him, they should doubt of his authority, it being resolved on among all men, that an impostor, or false teacher, is not heard by God, or enabled by him to work such miracles as these (for then God would be thought to assist him in his impostures); but only pious and faithful servants of God, who come to do his will, and not their own, are thus extraordinarily assisted; and therefore he infers, that if Christ were not sent of God, he could never do such things as these, so far above all human power, ver. 30, 31, 32, 33.

They being highly incensed at him, and upbraiding him as a person marked by his native blindness, for some extraordinary evil that was in him, reviling him for presuming to teach them that were such learned doctors and rabbins, cast him out from their presence, ver. 34.

Christ, hearing what they had done, finds the man out, and reveals himself more fully to him, as the Son of God, and true Messiah, and he thereupon believes in Jesus, and worships him as God incarnate, ver. 35, 36, 37, 38. Upon this occasion our Saviour declares what would be the event of his coming into the world, namely, that not only they who are blind should receive sight, but also that they who presume they see and know more than others; for their despising the gospel, and shutting their eyes against the light of it, should be left in their darkness, and by the just judgment of God be more and more blinded, ver. 39. The Pharisees there present, conceiving that by these latter words he reflected upon them, carp at him, that he should insinuate that they were blind, ver. 40. To whom he answers, that if they were blind (that is, simply ignorant, as they are who have no ordinary means of instruction) they should not have had so great sin as now they

they have; or if they were sensible of their blindness, and did penitently confess their sins, they would have no sin remaining on their souls unpardoned; for then they would come to him, the only Physician, to be cured, and would by faith lay hold on him for mercy and grace: but, conceiving their present condition good enough, they were kept off from applying themselves to the only remedy, and so their sins remained unpardoned to them, and their corruptions unpurged out of them, ver. 41.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS.

Never did Jesus move one foot, but to purpose. He passed by; but so, as that his virtue shined; he so passed by, that his eye was fixed: the blind man could not see him; he sees the blind man. His goodness prevents us; and yields better supplies to our wants. He saw compassionately, not shutting his eyes, not turning them aside, but bending them upon that dark and disconsolate object. That which was said of the sun, is much more true of him that made it; "Nothing is hid from his light;" but, of all things, miseries (especially of his own) are most intently eyed of him; could we be miserable, unseen, we had reason to be heartless. O Saviour, why should we not imitate thee in this merciful improvement of our senses? Woe be to those eyes that care only to gaze upon their own beauty, bravery, wealth, not abiding to glance upon the sores of Lazarus, the sorrows of Joseph, the dungeon of Jeremiah, the blind beggar at the gate of the temple!

The disciples see the blind man too; but with different eyes: our Saviour, for pity and cure; they for expostulation, "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he is born blind?" It was highly commendable in them, that whatever doubt troubled them, they straightway vent it into the ear of their master; O Saviour, while thou art in heaven, thy school is upon earth. Wherefore serve thy priests lips, but to preserve knowledge? What use is there of the tongue of the learned, but to speak a word in season? Thou teachest us still, and still we doubt, and ask, and learn.

In one short question I find two truths, and two falsehoods; the truths implied; the falsehoods expressed. It is true, that commonly man's suffering is for sin; that we may justly, and do often, suffer even for the sins of our parents; it is false to affirm, that there is no other cause of our suffering but sin: that a man could sin actually before he was; or was before his being; or could beforehand suffer for his after-sins. In all likelihood that absurd conceit of the transmigration of souls possessed the very disciples. How easily and how far may the best be misguided with a common error! We are not thankful for our own illumination, if we do not look with charity and pity upon the gross mis-conceptions of our brethren.

Our Saviour sees, and yet winks at so gross a blunder of his disciples; and yet I hear neither chiding or conviction. He that could have enlightened their minds (as he did the world) at once, chuses to do it by degrees; and only contents himself here with a mild solution: "Neither this man, nor his parents." We learn nothing of thee, O Saviour, if not meekness: what a sweet temper should be in our carriage towards weaknesses in the judgments of others! how should we instruct them without bitterness; and without violence of passion wait for the proper seasons of their better information! The tender mother or nurse doth not chide her little one because that he goes not well; but gives him her hand that he may go better. It is the spirit of lenity and meekness that must restore and confirm the fallen.

The answer is direct and punctual; neither the sin of the man, nor of his parents, bereaved him of his eyes; there was an higher cause of this privation; the glory that God meant should redound to himself by redressing it. The parents had sinned in themselves; the man had sinned in his first parents; it is not the guilt of either that is the cause of this blindness. All God's afflictive acts are not punishments; some are for the benefit of the creature; whether for probation, or prevention, or reformation: all are for the praise either of his divine power, or justice, or mercy.

It was fit so great a work should be ushered in with a preface. A sudden and abrupt appearance would not have been suitably adapted to so glorious a demonstration of omnipotence. The way is made, our Saviour addresses himself to the miracle; a miracle, not more in the thing done, than in the form of doing it.

The matter used was clay: could there be a meaner? could there be aught more unfit? O Saviour, how oft hadst thou cured blindnesses by thy word! how oft by thy touch! How easily couldst thou have done so here? was this to shew thy liberty, or thy power? Liberty, in that thou canst at pleasure use variety of means, not being tied to any; power, in that thou couldst make use of contraries: hadst thou pulled out a box, and applied some medicinal ointment to the eyes; something had been ascribed to thy skill; more to the natural power of the remedy: but now thou usest clay, which had been enough to stop up the eyes of the patient; the virtue, therefore, must be all in thee, none in the means: the utter disproportion of this help to the cure adds glory to the worker.

How clearly didst thou hence evince to the world, that thou, who of clay couldst make eyes, art the same who of clay didst make man! since there is no part of the body that hath so little analogy to clay as the eye; this clearness is contrary to that opacity: had not the Jews been more blind than the man whom thou curedst; and more hard and stiff than the clay which thou mollifiedst; they had, in this one work, both seen, and acknowledged thy divinity.

What could the clay have done, without thy tempering! It was thy spittle that made the clay effectual; it was that sacred mouth of thine that made the spittle medicinal; the water of Siloe could only wash off that clay which this inward moisture made powerful. The clay, thus tempered, must be applied by the hand that made it, else it avails nothing.

What must the blind man needs think, when he felt the cold clay upon the surface of his eyes! or (since he could not conceive what an eye was) what must the beholders needs think, to see that hollowness thus filled up! Is this the way to give either eyes or sight? Why did not the earth see with this clay, as well as the man? What is there to hinder the sight, if this can give it? Yet with those contrarieties must the faith be exercised, where God intends the blessing of a cure.

It was never meant that this clay should dwell upon those sockets of the eyes; it is only put on, to be washed off; and that not by every water; none shall do it but that of Siloam, which signifies Sent; and if the man had not been sent to Siloam, he had been still blind. All things receive their virtue from divine institution; how else should a piece of wheaten bread nourish the soul? How should the foolishness of preaching save souls? How should the absolution of God's minister be more effectual than the breath of an ordinary christian? Thou, O God, hast set apart these ordinances; thy blessing is annexed to them; hence is derived the ground of all our use, and their efficacy; hadst thou so ordained, Jordan would as well have healed blindness, and Siloam leprosy.

That the man might be capable of such a miracle, his faith is set to work; he must be led, with his eyes plaistered up, to the pool of Siloam. He washes, and sees. Lord, what did this man think when his eyes were now first given him! what a new world did he find himself now come into! how did he wonder at heaven and earth! and the faces and shapes of all creatures; the goodly varieties of colours, the chearfulness and brightness of the light, the lively beams of the sun, the vast expansions of the air, the pleasant transparency of the water; at the glorious piles of the temple, and stately palaces of Jerusalem! every thing did not more please than astonish him; lo, thus shall we be affected, and more, when, the scales of our mortality being done away, we shall see as we are seen; when we shall behold the blessedness of that other world, the glory of the saints and angels, the infinite majesty of the Son of God, the incomprehensible brightness of the all-glorious Deity. Oh my soul, that thou couldst be taken up beforehand with the admiration of that which thou canst not as yet be capable of foreseeing!

It could not be but that many eyes had been witnesses of this man's want of eyes. He sat begging at one of the temple gates; not only all the city, but all the country must needs

needs know him: thrice a year did they come up to Jerusalem; neither could they come to the temple and not see him. His very blindness made him noted: deformities and infirmities of body more easily both draw and fix the eye, than an ordinary symmetry of parts.

Besides his blindness, his trade made him remarkable; the importunity of his begging drew the eyes of the passengers; but, of all others, the place most distinguished him. Had he sat in some obscure village of Judæa, or in some blind lane of Jerusalem, perhaps, he had not been heeded of many; but now as he took up his seat in the heart, in the head of the chief city whither all resorted from all parts; what Jew can there be that knows not the blind beggar at the temple gate? Purposely, did our Saviour make choice of such a subject for his miracle; a man so poor, so public; the glory of the work could not have reached so far, if it had been done to the wealthiest citizen of Jerusalem. Neither was it for nothing that the act and the man is doubted of, and inquired into by the beholders; "Is not this he that sat begging?" some said, "It is he;" others said, "It is like him." No truths have received so full proofs as those that have been questioned. The want, or the sudden presence of an eye (much more of both) must needs make a great change in the face; those little balls of light (which no doubt were more clear than nature could have made them) could not but give a new life to the countenance. I marvel not if the neighbours, who were accustomed to see this dark visage, led by a guide, and guided by a staff, walking confidently alone, by his own inward light, and looking them cheerfully in the face, doubted whether this were he. The miraculous cures of God work a sensible alteration in men, not more in their own apprehension, than in the judgments of others. Thus, in the removal of spiritual blindness, the whole habit of the man is changed; where before his face looked dull and earthly, now there is a sprightly cheerfulness in it, through the comfortable knowledge of God, and heavenly things. Whereas before his heart was set upon worldly things, now he uses them, but enjoys them not as a substantial good; and that use is because he must, not because he would: where before his fears and griefs were only for pains of body, or loss of estate or reputation, now they are only spent upon the displeasure of his God, and the peril of his soul; so that now the neighbours can say, "Is this the man?" others, "It is like him;" and others, "It is not he."

The late blind man hears, and now sees himself questioned; and soon resolves the doubt, "I am he." He that now saw the light of the sun, would not hide the light of truth from others. It is an ungrateful silence to smother the works of God in an affected secrecy; to make God a loser by his bounty to us, were a shameful injustice: we ourselves dislike those sponges that suck up good turns so as to conceal them. O God, we are not worthy of our spiritual eye-sight, if we do not publish thy mercies on the house top, and praise thee in the great congregation.

Man is naturally inquisitive; we search studiously into the secret works of nature; we pry into the reasons of the witty inventions of art; but if there be any thing that transcends art and nature, the more high and abstruse it is, the more busy should we be to search into it. This thirst after hidden, yea forbidden knowledge, once cost us dear; but, where it is good and lawful to know, inquiry is commendable, as here in these Jews; "How were thine eyes opened?" The first improvement of human reason is investigation, the next is information and resolution; and, if the meanest events do not escape us without inquiry, how much less those that carry in them wonder and advantage!

He that was so ready to profess himself the subject of the cure, is no niggard of proclaiming the author of it; "A man that is called Jesus made clay and anointed mine eyes, and sent me to Siloam to wash, and now I see." The blind man knew no more than he said; and he said what he apprehended, "A man." He heard Jesus speak, he felt his hand; as yet he could look no further: at his next meeting, he saw God in this man. In matter of knowledge, we must be content to creep before we can go. As that other recovered blind man saw first men walk like trees, and afterwards like men; so no wonder if this man saw first this God only as a man, and then this man as God also. From that time he thinks him a wonderful man, a mighty prophet. In vain shall we either expect a sudden perfection in the understanding of divine matters, or censure those that want it.

How

How did this man know what Jesus did? He was then stone-blind; what distinction could he yet make of persons, or of actions? True; but yet the blind man never wanted the assistance of others' eyes; their relation hath assured him of the manner of his cure; besides the assistance of his other senses, his ear might perceive the spittle to fall, and hear the enjoined command; his feeling perceived the cold and moist clay upon his lids; all these conspired to give sufficient warrant thus to believe, thus to report.

Our ear is our best guide to a full apprehension of the works of Christ; the works of God the Father, his creation and government, are best known by the eye; the works of God the Son, his redemption and mediation, are best known by the ear. O Saviour, we cannot personally see what thou hast done here: what are the monuments of thine apostles and evangelists, but the relations of the blind man's Guide, what and how thou hast wrought for us! On these we strongly rely, these we reverence and trust to be made happy partakers of the blessings of.

CHAPTER IX.

CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD. HE SHEWS THE WAY TO ETERNAL LIFE. MARTHA AND MARY ENTERTAIN JESUS, WHO PREFERS MARY FOR HER ATTENTION TO HIS DOCTRINE. BLASPHEMOUS ACCUSATION OF THE JEWS REFUTED. THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES SHARPLY REPROVED BY CHRIST. DIFFERENT SECTS AMONG THE JEWS. CAUTIONS AGAINST THE LEAVEN OR DOCTRINES OF THE PHARISEES, AND ENCOURAGEMENTS TO BELIEVERS. DEPENDENCE ON DIVINE PROVIDENCE RECOMMENDED. CHRIST CURES A WOMAN OF A GREAT INFIRMITY OF BODY, AND SHEWS THE NATURE OF HIS KINGDOM. AT THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, HE SHEWS THE TRUE CAUSE OF THE JEWS' INFIDELITY. IN ANSWER TO A CURIOUS QUESTION, HE POINTS OUT THE ONLY WAY OF SALVATION. MARKS OF DISCIPLESHIP. PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP, THE LOST GROAT, THE LOST SON, AND THE UNJUST STEWARD.

CHRIST having upbraided the Pharisees for their blindness, and intimated that they were blind leaders of the blind, though they thought themselves the only guides and teachers of the people, now propounds the parable of the true and false shepherd, who are described by their contrary marks and properties, and points out himself as the true shepherd of his sheep, and consequently that he was the true Messiah, who had been promised under that name, Ezek. xxxiv. 23. "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David, he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd." And upon this occasion he shews who is the good shepherd, by these four marks:

1. The good shepherd "enters in at the door," that is, in a right or approved way, not in a clandestine or indirect; and "to him the porter openeth," that is, the Spirit of God makes him a shepherd and overseer, and admits him to that charge, as a porter openeth to him whom the master of the house alloweth to be admitted. It is not so with the false shepherd; for he obtrudes himself upon the people, and has no warrant from God, nor any lawful and divine calling; but coming in by a sinister way, and bringing in false doctrine, endeavours by craft or violence to steal the sheep from Christ, John x. ver. 1, 2, 3.

2. The good shepherd "calleth his sheep by their names," which importeth his particular care and inspection over the flock, and his acquaintance with their condition, that he may know how to apply himself suitably to them; which though it be eminently verified in Christ, yet it is the duty of every faithful pastor and under-shepherd in his measure to labour after, ver. 3.

3. He leads forth his sheep into good pastures, and feeds them with sound doctrine, ver. 3.

4. He goes before them (alluding to the manner of shepherds in that country) by sound instruction and good example; and the sheep follow him, and are guided by him; but a stranger they will not follow, when he calls them to follow him in a wrong way; for they do not approve the voice of such a stranger, ver. 4, 5.

The Pharisees not understanding what he meant by this parable, he opens his meaning to them, ver. 6. and plainly intimates, that both they and the Scribes did but make a prey of the people, and that he himself was the true compassionate shepherd, which he further manifests by declaring these two things:

1. That he himself is the "Door," and that there is no access to God, but in and through him: that all that came before him, either giving themselves out for this door (and pretending to be the Messiah), or teaching another way to salvation than in and by him, were thieves and murderers, and came only to pervert and destroy the sheep: but the true children of God were kept from heeding, at least from finally following such deceivers, ver. 7, 8. That all who enter by him the right door, shall, 1. Be put into a safe state, and secured under his protection. 2. Shall have the spiritual pastures of his word and ordinances. 3. Having a life of grace begun in them by him (who came for that end), they shall grow and increase to more and more perfection, till they come to attain eternal life in glory, ver. 9, 10.

2. That he himself is the "Good Shepherd," and differs much from mercenaries and hirelings in his carriage towards the sheep. For the hireling will not charge himself with the sheep, nor expose himself to any danger for them, but when he sees the wolf coming (that is, seducers or persecutors), he will fly or shift for himself; whereby he reflected, it seems, upon the Scribes and Pharisees, who were covetous, and taught only or principally for gain, and regarded not the eternal welfare of those they taught. But he differed much from these hirelings: 1. In that he should shortly give his life for his sheep, ver. 11, 12, 13. 2. In that he knew and took special notice and care of his sheep, and was known of them, that is, believed on, beloved, and obeyed by them. For as the Father knoweth him, and he the Father; so he knoweth his sheep, and is known of them, ver. 14, 15. 3. He proves himself to be the true shepherd from another property, which is his care to enlarge his fold and church, by bringing in his elect into it from among the Gentiles, and so making one church, both of Jews and Gentiles, and taking down the partition wall, ver. 16. 4. He declares the acceptableness and meritoriousness of his death in the sight of his Father; which was not forced upon him, but he yielded to it by a voluntary resignation, being assured he should recover himself again out of the bands of death. 5. And lastly, he declares his cheerful obedience, and ready submission to his Father in this great work of our redemption, ver. 17, 18.

The effects of this sermon among the people were very different. Some calumniated him, as one possessed and mad, and therefore not to be heard or minded. Others, of a more sober and considering spirit, said, that the doctrine he taught, and the late miracle he had wrought in curing the blind man, were abundantly sufficient to confute such a calumny; see John x. 19, 20, 21.

Now the seventy disciples return from the employment on which their Master had sent them (see p. 174.) with great joy declaring the success of their ministry and miracles, and how that not only diseases, but the devils themselves, through his name, were subject unto them, and were cast out of the bodies of those whom they had possessed, ver. 17. Our Saviour confirms their report, declaring that, whilst they were preaching his gospel, he saw Satan (styled "the prince of the air," Eph. ii. 2, and "ruling in high places," Eph. vi. 12) swiftly as lightning to fall down, and lose his power and dominion, ver. 18. And that he might further encourage them in their work, he tells them, he gave them now for the future power over devils, and to be above any harm that the most mischievous creature, which the devil might use as his instrument, could do unto them, ver. 19. Yet, lest they should be puffed up with this high gift, and the success of their ministry, he admonishes them to be humble, and instructs them wherein to rejoice, correcting their carnal joy, which they, it seems, conceived in reflecting on the miracles they had wrought, and the subjection of devils to them (for hypocrites and reprobates have done the same, Mat. vii. 22, 23), and directing them to the true joy of Christians, namely, to rejoice that they should be inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, ver. 20. Then, in contemplating how the gospel was received by the poorer and meaner

fort, and rejected by the Scribes and Pharisees, he breaks forth into an exultation of spirit, praising his Father for revealing the glorious things of salvation to babes and despised weaklings, and hiding them from proud contemners, ver. 21. He also declares, that all power in heaven and earth was committed to him, as he is God-man and Mediator, by the Father, and all things delivered to him that he was to communicate to the children of men: and that no angel or man knows his divine nature, and eternal generation, comprehensively, but the Father only: so likewise the glory of the Father's person, he shews, is a mystery which none knows perfectly but the Son; and that measure of right knowledge of the Father which any attain unto, they receive it from the Son, who reveals it to them by his word and Spirit, ver. 22. And lastly, turning to his disciples, he tells them that their eyes are happy that have seen the Messiah in the flesh, and the effects of his glorious power, which many prophets and kings desired to see, but had not that happiness vouchsafed unto them.

About this time a certain doctor and interpreter of the law, to try whether he would deliver any thing contrary to the law of Moses, that he might find occasion against him, asked him, "What he must do to inherit eternal life?" Our Saviour, perceiving him puffed up with a conceit of his own righteousness, sends him to the law, that he might thereby be convinced of his sins and guiltiness, and how short he came of performing what the law required [Rom. iii. 20. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin," Gal. iii. 21. ver. 22, 24.], that so he might be brought to seek after salvation by Christ, or be left inexcusable; and thus he dealt with another self-justifier, Mat. xix. 17. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." But when he had to do with humble contrite sinners, who sincerely sought the way to eternal life, he directly pointed them to faith in himself. Thus he dealt with Nicodemus, declaring to him, John iii. 16. that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." So when the gaoler, humbled with a sense of his sin, and being far from any opinion of merit in himself, asked, what he must do to be saved, Paul and Silas answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved," Acts xvi. 30, 31. But this lawyer, being desirous to justify himself, and to shew that he had kept the whole law, and presuming, it seems, more especially that he had kept the first table, appears only doubtful concerning a branch of the second, and therefore asks our Saviour, "Who was his neighbour?" imagining he would have answered according to the false doctrine of the Pharisees, Mat. v. 43. that by the word neighbour*, is to be understood friends, kinsfolks, neighbours by habitation, and no others; and if so, then he would have concluded he had exactly fulfilled the commandment. But Christ shews him how much he was mistaken, by the parable of a man of the Jewish nation, that fell among thieves, by whom he was wounded and pillaged, and being not pitied or helped by the priest and Levite (persons of his own nation) that passed that way, was at length relieved and succoured by a Samaritan, notwithstanding the Jews and Samaritans were such professed enemies the one to the other: by which he declares, that even professed enemies and strangers, and every one that stands in need of our help and relief, is to be accounted our neighbour, and that our charity should not be restrained only to friends, relations, and acquaintance.

Christ then came to Bethany, to the house of Martha, who busies herself to provide for his entertainment; whilst her sister Mary attends upon his word and doctrine, as one that earnestly desired to know and embrace the way to salvation, the one thing primarily and absolutely necessary, the benefit of which will continue to her to all eternity; and for this she is highly commended by Christ, and preferred before Martha.

* The Pharisees accounted none for a brother, but an Israelite by blood; and none for a neighbour, but such as was become a proselyte to their religion.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS on the Conduct of MARTHA and MARY.

Martha, it seems, as being the elder sister, bore the name of the housekeeper; Mary was her assistant in the charge; a blessed pair! Sisters not more in nature than grace, in spirit no less than in flesh. How happy a thing it is when all the parties in a family are jointly agreed to entertain Christ!

No sooner is Jesus entered into the house than he falls to preaching: that no time may be lost, he does not so much as wait till his meat be made ready; but while his bodily repast was in hand, provides spiritual food for his hosts. It was the meat and drink of Jesus to do the will of his Father: he fed more upon his own diet, than he could possibly upon theirs; and his best cheer was, to see them spiritually fed. How should we, whom he hath called to this sacred function, be instant, in season, and out of season! We are, by his sacred ordination, the lights of the world: no sooner is the candle lighted, than it gives that light which it hath, and never intermits till it be wasted to the snuff.

Both the sisters, for a time, sat attentively listening to the words of Christ: at length, household occasions call Martha away: but Mary sits still at his feet, and hears. Which shall we most praise, her humility, or her docility? I do not see her take a stool, and sit by him; or a chair, and sit above him; but, as desiring to shew that her heart was as low as her knees, she sits at his feet: she was lowly seated, and richly warmed with those heavenly beams. The greater submission, the more grace: if there be one hollow in the valley lower than another, thither the waters gather.

Martha's house is become a divinity-school: Jesus, as the doctor, sits in the chair; Martha, Mary, and the rest, sit as disciples, at his feet: standing implies a readiness to motion; sitting, a settled composedness to this holy attendance.

Had these two sisters provided our Saviour ever such delicacies, and waited on his trencher ever so officiously; yet had they not listened to his instruction, they had not bid him welcome; neither had he so well liked his entertainment. This was the way to feast him; by feeding their ears with his heavenly doctrine: his best cheer is our proficiency; our best cheer is his word. Oh Saviour, let my soul be feasted by thee, do thou thus feast thyself by feeding me; this mutual diet shall be thy praise, and my happiness.

Though Martha was, for the time, an attentive hearer, yet now her care of Christ's entertainment carries her into the kitchen; Mary sits still; yet she was not more devout, than Martha busy. Martha is careful to feast Jesus; Mary, to be feasted of him. There was more solicitude in Martha's active part, more piety in Mary's sedentary attendance; I know not in which of them there is more zeal. Good Martha was desirous to express her joy and thankfulness for the presence of so blessed a guest, by the actions of her careful and plentiful entertainment: I know not how to censure the holy woman for her excess of care, to welcome her Saviour: surely she herself thought she did well; and, out of that confidence, fears not to complain to Christ of her sister.

I do not see her come to her sister, and whisper in her ear the great need she stood in of her help, but she comes to Jesus, in a sort of unkind expostulation concerning her neglect, makes her moan to him, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" Why did she not rather make her first address to her sister? Was it because she knew Mary was so tied by the ears with those adamant chains that came from the mouth of Christ, that, till his silence, and dismissal took place, she had no power to stir? Or was it out of honour and respect to Christ, that, in his presence she would not presume to call off her sister without his leave?

I cannot, however, excuse the holy woman from some weaknesses. It was a fault to measure her sister by herself, and, apprehending her own act to be good, to think her sister could not do well if she did not so too: whereas goodness hath much latitude; ill is opposed to good; not good to good; neither, in things lawful or indifferent, are others bound to our examples: Mary might hear, Martha might serve, and both do well; Mary did not censure Martha for her rising from the feet of Christ, to prepare his meal; neither should Martha have censured Mary for sitting at Christ's feet, to feed her soul. It was a fault

fault that she thought an excessive care of a liberal outward entertainment of Christ was to be preferred to a diligent attention to Christ's spiritual entertainment of them: it was a fault, that she durst presume to charge our Saviour with some kind of disregard to her fatigue, "Lord, dost thou not care?" What sayest thou, Martha? dost thou challenge the Lord of heaven and earth of inconsideration and neglect? Dost thou take upon thee to prescribe to that infinite wisdom, instead of receiving directions from him? It is well thou didst meet with a Saviour, whose gracious mildness knows how to pardon and pity the errors of our zeal.

Yet, I must needs say, here wanted not fair pretences for the ground of this thy expostulation: thou, the elder sister, workest; Mary, the younger, sits still; and what work was thine but the hospitable reception of thy Saviour, and his train? Had it been for satisfying thine own appetite, or that of some carnal friends, it had been less excusable; but it was for Christ himself, to whom thou couldst never be too officious.

But all this cannot deliver thee from the just blame of this bold and peevish question, "Lord, dost thou not care?" How ready is our weakness, upon every slight discontent, to quarrel with our best friend; yea, with our good God! and the more we are put to it, to think ourselves the more neglected; and to challenge God for our neglect! Do we groan on the bed of our sickness, and, while languishing in pain, complain of long hours and weary sides? Straitway we think, "Lord, dost thou not care that we suffer?" Doth God's poor church go to wreck, while the ploughers, ploughing on her back, make long furrows; and, "Lord, dost thou not care?" But know thou, O thou feeble and distrustful soul, the more thou dost, the more thou sufferest, the more thou art cared for; neither is God ever so tender over his church, as when it is most exercised: every pang, stitch, and agony, is first felt of him that sends it. O God, thou knowest our works, and our labour, and our patience; we may be ignorant and diffident, thou canst not but be gracious.

It could not but trouble devout Mary to hear her sister's impatient complaint; a complaint of herself to Christ, with so much vehemence of passion, as if there had been such strangeness betwixt the two sisters, that the one would do nothing for the other without an external compulsion from a superior. How can Mary choose but think, If I have offended, why was I not secretly taxed for it in a sisterly familiarity? What if there has been some little omission; must the whole house ring of it before my Lord, and all his disciples? Is this carriage becoming a sister? Is my devotion worthy of a quarrel? Lord, dost thou not care that I am injuriously censured? Yet I hear not a word of reply from that modest mouth. O holy Mary, I admire thy patient silence: thy sister blames thee for thy piety; the disciples afterwards blame thee for thy bounty and cost; not a word falls from thee, in a just vindication of thine honour and innocence, but, keeping an humble silence, thou leavest thine answer to thy Saviour. How should we learn of thee, when we are complained of for well-doing, to seal up our lips, and expect our justification from above!

How sure, how ready art thou, O Saviour, to speak in the cause of the dumb! "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen the better part." What need had Mary to speak for herself, when she found such an advocate? Doubtless Martha was as it were divided from herself, with the multiplicity of her careful thoughts; our Saviour therefore doubles her name in his compellation; that in such distraction he may both find and fix her heart. The good woman made full account that Christ would have sent away her sister with a check, and herself with thanks; but now, her hopes fail her; and though she be not directly reprov'd, yet she hears her sister is more approved than she; "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things." Our Saviour received courtesy from her, by her diligent and costly entertainment; nevertheless, he would not palliate her error, and soothe her up in her weak misconduct. No obligations should so enthrall us as that our tongues should not be free to reprove faults where we find them: they are base and servile spirits that will have their tongue tied to their teeth.

This

This glance towards a reproof implies an opposition of the condition of the two sisters; themselves were not more allied in nature, than their present humour and state differed. One is opposed to many, necessary to superfluous, solicitude to quietness: "Thou art careful and troubled about many things, one thing is necessary." How far then may our care be exercised on these earthly things! On the one side, O Saviour, thou hast charged us to take no thought what to eat, drink, put on; on the other, thy chosen vessel hath told us, that "he who provides not for his family hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." We may, we must care for many things; so that our care be for good and proper: for good, both in kind and measure; proper, so that it be free from distraction, from distrust: from distraction, that it hinder us not from pursuing the necessary duties of our general calling; from distrust, that we doubt not of God's providence, while we employ our own diligence. We cannot care for thee, unless we thus care for ourselves, for ours.

Alas, how much care do I see every where, but how few Martha's! Her care was for her Saviour's entertainment, ours for ourselves; one finds perplexities in his estate, from which he desires to be extricated; another beats his brains for advancing his family; this person busies his thoughts about the doubtful condition (as he thinks) of the times; and perplexes his anxious head about the imaginary events of all things, opposing his hopes to his fears; while that studies how to avoid the mischievous designs of an adversary; "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things." Foolish men that we are! why do we put our hearts on the rack, when we need not? why will we submit to bend under that burden which more able shoulders have offered to undertake for our ease? Thou hast commanded us, O God, to cast our cares upon thee, with promise to care for us. Oh that we may gladly unload ourselves upon thee! Oh let our care be, to depend on thee, as thine is to provide for us!

Whether Martha be pitied or blamed for her industry, I am sure Mary is praised for her devotion; "One thing is needful." This is not said by way of negation, as if nothing were necessary but this; but by way of comparison, as that nothing is so necessary as this. Earthly occasions must give way to spiritual; of those three main grounds of all our actions, necessity, convenience, pleasure, each transcends the other: convenience carries it away from pleasure; necessity from convenience; and one degree of necessity from another. The degrees are according to the conditions of the things necessary. The condition of these earthly necessities, is, that without them we cannot live temporally; the condition of the spiritual, that without them we cannot live eternally: so much difference, then, as there is betwixt temporary and eternal, so much there must needs be betwixt the necessity of these bodily actions, and those spiritual; both are necessary in their kinds: neither must here be an opposition, but a subordination; the body and soul must be friends, not rivals; we must not so ply the Christian, as to neglect the man. Oh the vanity of those men, who, neglecting that one thing necessary, affect many things superfluous; nothing is needless with worldly minds but this one which is only necessary, the care of their souls: how justly do they lose what they cared not for, while they over-care for that which is neither worthy, nor possible to be kept!

Neither is Mary's business more approved, than herself—"She hath chosen the good part;" it was not forced upon her, but taken up by her election. Martha might have sat still, as well as she; she might have stirred about, as well as Martha. Mary's will made this choice; not without the inclining power of him who both gave this will and commends it. That will was before renewed; no wonder, then, if it choose the good; though this were not in a course of good and evil, but of good and better; we have still this holy freedom, through the inward operation of him that hath freed us: happy are we if we can improve this liberty to the best advantage of our souls!

The stability or perpetuity of good adds much to the praise of it; Martha's part was soon gone; the thanks and use of a little outward hospitality cannot long last; but, "Mary's shall not be taken away from her:" the act of her hearing was transient, the fruit permanent; she now hears that which shall stick by her for ever.

One of his disciples now desired Jesus to teach them to pray, as John taught his disciples; whereupon he a second time gives them the same breviary, or pattern of prayer, for substance, which he had taught them before in his sermon on the Mount, almost a year and a half ago, ver. 1 to 5. Then he stirs them up to pray fervently, and with importunity, and gives them arguments to strengthen their faith, drawn from two parables: the one is, of a friend coming to his friend at midnight, and by his importunity obtaining his desire of him; whence he leaves them to infer, that if an impudent beggar can obtain so much from man, what cannot an humble, earnest, and daily petitioner, obtain from God, if he ask the things agreeable to his will? The other is, of a father, who, if his son ask bread of him, will give him bread, and what is good for him, and not, instead thereof, that which may be hurtful to him.

About the same time Christ was casting out a devil, that had inflicted a disease upon a man, and deprived him of his speech, restoring the man to his speech again. Some hereupon blasphemously said, that "he cast out devils through Beelzebub." Others, in order to make trial of his power, desired him to shew them some sign or miracle from heaven, that might convince them, and put it out of doubt, that God had sent him (from ver. 14. to 17.) To the former of these, who suggested that he used the devil's power to cast out devils, he replies, that if there be a division among the evil spirits, and one devil set himself against another, their kingdom cannot long endure; such a division, wherein one devil strives to eject another, and does his utmost to cast him and his dominion out of the world, cannot be imagined among those that are of a conspiracy, but only among enemies bent to ruin one another, ver. 17, 18. He further shews, that they had sundry exorcists and magicians among them (such as those mentioned Acts xix. 13, 14.) who did cast out devils, and they thought they did it by the power of God: why then did they judge otherwise of him, who was not so obnoxious to be suspected of any compact with the devil, as those forcerers were. But if he, by the Spirit and power of God, did cast out devils, and dispossessed them of the tyranny they exercised over the souls and bodies of men (as it was most evident he did), then they might know assuredly that the kingdom (which is not a terrene and earthly, but a spiritual and heavenly kingdom) was begun among them, ver. 19, 20. And they might be further satisfied that it was so, because the devil will not be cast out of his possession unless some person, armed with the power of God, come and conquer him. And therefore his "casting out devils" was an argument that he came with power greater than any the devil had, ver. 21, 22. And the proverb (ver. 23. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth") would make it evident, that he that doth not assist and help, but casts out Satan, is an enemy of his, and doth not operate by power received from him; hence therefore it follows, that they that would not defend him, and actively take his part against such blasphemies as these, believing and acknowledging that by the power and Spirit of God he did those miracles, shewed themselves to be against him, and to take part with his adversaries; for in such cases, he that doth not assist him, is certainly against him, and for his enemy, and hinders his work. But to them that had received such miracles of mercy (particularly that to have devils cast out among them), and had made no better use of them, he shews them the danger they were in by another parable, of the devil's regaining possession after ejection.

As he spake these things, a certain woman of the company, admiring, it seems, the divine wisdom she discerned in him, cried out, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee;" to whom he replieth, Whosoever shall hear and obey the word of God, is to me as dear as mother or brethren; intimating, that it is more blessed to bear him in the heart by believing in him, and obeying his commandments, than to bear him in the womb only, in the way of nature.

Jesus now comes to give answer to the second thing which was demanded of him, viz. a sign from heaven; and for that he tells them, that no other sign should be given them, than that of the prophet Jonas, that is, the wonder of his resurrection, ver. 29, 30. And then he threatens them for their obstinacy and impenitence, which he aggravates from

from the example of the queen of the South, and people of Nineveh, ver. 31, 32. He further shews, that though his preaching found little good effect in that evil generation, by reason of their perverseness and unbelief, yet he would not hide the light which he brought into the world, nor conceal that heavenly doctrine which his Father had committed to him, to communicate to the children of men, ver. 33. Then intimating why that generation continued blind in so clear a light of the gospel (namely, because the eye of their mind was darkened), he warns them to take heed of an evil dark eye, that is, that the eye of their mind (viz. their judgment) be not darkened or vitiated with ambition, pride, envy, malice, covetousness, and other wicked affections, whereby they may be hindered from receiving the truth preached unto them, and instead thereof, be induced to oppose it, ver. 34, 35. for if the mind be clearly enlightened by the word and Spirit of God, that light will diffuse and spread itself like the bright shining of a candle, upon all the faculties and affections, and will guide and direct all the outward actions and whole conversation, and will expand itself also to the enlightening of others, ver. 36.

When Christ had spoken these things, a certain Pharisee desired him to dine with him (having invited, it seems, several other Pharisees, and Scribes, and lawyers, at the same time) possibly that he might see whether, in the company of so many learned men, he would utter any thing whereof they might afterwards accuse him. Our Saviour accepts the invitation, and comes; but not washing his hands before dinner, which the Pharisees held a religious rite, this carriage of his gives offence, and is much marvelled at by them: hereupon he takes occasion sharply to reprehend them, and to pronounce a woe against them; for several of their vain and unprofitable customs.

1. For their superstition, in observing many external washings not commanded by God, but neglecting the inward purgations of their souls and consciences from sin and wickedness; which was as if a man should wash the outside of his vessels only, leaving the insides of them full of filthiness: thus they washed their bodies, leaving their souls full of all uncleanness; they washed their hands, and neglected their hearts, not considering that God made the soul, as well as the body, and requires that both should be kept pure, that he may be served in both, according to his own will, and not their traditions. He further shews, that the way to purify their states, meats, and drinks from all pollution cleaving to them, and to have them sanctified, and made lawful and comfortable to them, is (in conjunction with other graces) by doing works of mercy, and by liberal alms-giving according to their abilities, and the things they had and enjoyed. (From ver. 37 to 42.)

2. For their strict and scrupulous observing the lesser things of the law, as tything mint and rue, &c. but being careless respecting the main and principal duties they owed to God and man, ver. 42.

3. For their ambition, pride, and desire of popularity, affecting the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and salutations in the markets, ver. 43.

4. For their hypocrisy, being like graves and sepulchres grown over with grass, which, though they hold dead men's bones and putrefaction, yet, by not appearing, men walked unawares over them, and so were polluted by them; intimating, that the inward filthy corruptions of the Pharisees not appearing to men, they were easily deceived by their outward shews of sanctity, and so fell into a dangerous imitation of them, ver. 44.

5. He also reprehends the doctors and expositors of the law, pronouncing a woe upon them also:

1. For their rigid and imperious exaction of obedience to the whole ceremonial law (which Peter calls a yoke which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear, Acts xv. 10.) charging the people with many burdensome traditions, and in the mean time favouring and dispensing with their observance themselves, ver. 45, 46.

2. For their readiness to tread in the steps of their forefathers, who killed the prophets; for though they adorned the sepulchres of the prophets, slain by their ancestors, yet at the same time they shewed themselves like to their fathers by their hatred to the messengers of God sent to them, and by their persecuting of him the true Messiah, and thirsting after his blood. And he who is the eternal subsisting Wisdom of the Father (Prov. viii. 12. 1 Cor. i. 24. compared with Mat. xxiii. 34.), who certainly knows all things, and cannot be mistaken

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in his predictions, tells them, that he shall send them prophets, and teachers, and apostles among them, and some of them they shall kill, and some of them chase away by persecution: so that they, continuing in the sins of their fathers, and of all bloody men that have been before them, when they had filled up the measure of their sins, by crucifying him, and persecuting his apostles, God would no longer bear with them, but would bring upon such a bloody generation all that destruction which he may justly inflict for the shedding of all those holy men's blood which hath been shed, from the blood of righteous Abel (whose blood cried unto the Lord, Gen. iv. 10. unto the blood of Zacharias, whom they stoned between the altar and the temple, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20. whose dying words were, "The Lord look upon it, and require it.") And this prediction of our Saviour was fulfilled on that generation in that woeful destruction of Jerusalem, of which see Mat. xxiv. from ver. 47 to 52.

3. For their usurping and appropriating to themselves the sole power and skill of understanding and interpreting the scriptures, captivating men's consciences to their opinions, and keeping them by their false glosses and interpretations from the means of knowing the true sense of the word of God (which is the key whereby an entrance into heaven is opened unto men; which being taken away, that entrance is as it were shut up), and keeping them from embracing the gospel now preached to them; and being so far from receiving and embracing Christ themselves (who is the way, the truth, and the life, John xiv. 6.), that they hindered those that were inclinable to receive him as much as they could, Luke xi. 52.

The Scribes and Pharisees were exceedingly enraged at these sayings of his, and began captiously to question with him about many things, hoping they should at length catch something out of his words, whereof to accuse him; but in that they failed of their expectation and design.

An innumerable company of people being now, it seems, gathered together about the house of the Pharisee where Christ had dined, that they might hear him, he comes forth to teach them, but principally directs his speech to his disciples, whom he instructs in several particulars; and, among others, to beware of the affected and hypocritical ostentation of holiness, by which the Pharisees set forth themselves among the people, in order to obtain authority and credit to their false doctrines and unscriptural traditions.

Sects among the Jews, in our Saviour's Time, described.

I shall here endeavour to present the reader with a more particular account of the different sects which are mentioned in the New Testament. A great proof of the corruption and degeneracy of the Jewish church may be taken from the many sects and divisions that were in it, a thing which the Jews themselves, in their writings, confess would happen in the days of the Messiah, whose kingdom, that is, the Jewish state, should be over-run with heretical opinions. For the history of these divisions, their occasion and progress, with an account of what was peculiar to every sect, take the following extracts.

The Jews, after their return from the Babylonish captivity, and the full settling of their church again in the land of Israel, appear to have been divided chiefly into two parties. The one, adhering to the written word only, believed that in the observance of that alone they fulfilled all righteousness, and upon this foundation thought themselves sufficiently entitled to the name of Zadikim, or the righteous. The other, over-and-above the written law, superadded the traditional constitutions of the elders and other rigorous observances, to which they voluntarily devoted themselves: and from hence, reckoning themselves possessed of a degree of holiness superior to that of their brethren, they assumed the name of Chasidim, or the pious; these latter are mentioned in the Maccabees by the name of Assideans. From the former sect, that is, the sect of Zadikim, proceeded the Samaritans, the Sadducees, and the Karaites; and from the latter, namely, the Chasidim, sprung the Pharisees and the Essenes. All these subdivisions were in being at the time of our Lord, and are all mentioned in the New Testament, except the Essenes. But then we have

have another sect, that of the Herodians, taken notice of in the gospels, which had its rise after the others, and from a different cause. We shall inquire into the particular tenets of them all in some following paragraphs, and why some of them are so very severely censured by our Lord; whilst the Essenes, though pretty numerous, are not at all mentioned. And in this we shall chiefly follow Dr. Prideaux, as finding in no other author an account of them in so few words, so very good, full, and satisfactory.

The greatest of all the Jewish sects, was that of the Pharisees; for they had not only the Scribes and all the learned men of their party, but also the bulk of the common people. It is said of them in scripture, that "whereas the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit, the Pharisees confess both;" that is, first, that there is to be a resurrection from the dead; and, secondly, that there are angels and spirits: but, according to Josephus, this resurrection of theirs was no more than a Pythagorean resurrection, that is, a resurrection of the soul only by its transmigration into another body, and being born anew with it; but from this resurrection they excluded all that were notoriously wicked, for of such their notion was, that their souls, as soon as separated from their bodies, were transmitted into a state of everlasting woe, there to suffer the punishment of their sins to all eternity. But as to lesser crimes, their opinion was, that they were punished in the bodies which the souls of those that committed them were next sent into. According to this notion it was that Christ's disciples asked him, in the case of the man that was born blind, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" for this plainly supposeth an antecedent state of being, otherwise it cannot be conceived that a man could sin before he was born. And when the disciples told Christ, that some said of him, that he was Elias, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets, this can be understood no otherwise but that they thought, according to the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, that he was come into the world with the soul of Elias, or of Jeremiah, or of some other of the old prophets, transmitted unto him, and born with him. These two instances put together, plainly prove what Josephus saith, which is, that the resurrection held by the Jews in those times was no other than a Pythagorean resurrection of the same soul in another body. But when Christ came, who brought life and immortality to light, he first taught the resurrection of the same body and soul together; and soon after the Jews learned it from his followers, and ever since have taught it in the same manner as they did; for all their books, now extant, speak of the resurrection of the dead, and the last judgment thereon to follow, no otherwise in the main particulars than as the Christians do.

As to what the Pharisees held of predestination and free-will, it is hard to say what their doctrine was as to this matter. According to Josephus, they held absolute predestination with the Essenes, and free-will with the Sadducees, jumbling both together; for they ascribed to God and fate all that is done, and yet left no man the freedom of his will. But how they made these two apparent incompatibles consist together, is no where sufficiently explained; probably they meant no more, than that every man freely chooses what he is unalterably predestinated to: but if he be predestinated to that choice, how freely soever he may seem to choose, certainly he hath no free-will, because he is, according to this scheme, unalterably necessitated to all that he does, and cannot possibly choose otherwise.

But the main distinguishing character of this sect was, their zeal for the traditions of the elders, which they derived from the same fountain with the written word itself, pretending both to have been delivered to Moses from Mount Sinai, and therefore they ascribed equally to both the same authority. This sect of men (who made it their chief business to propagate these traditions, and promote their observance) had its birth at the same time with them, and they grew up together; till at length they came to such a maturity and ascendancy, that the traditional law swallowed up the written law, and they who were the propagators of the former composed the whole bulk of the Jewish nation. These men, by reason of their pretences to a more nice and rigorous observance of the law according to the traditions which they had superadded to it, looked on themselves as more holy than other men, and therefore separated themselves from those whom they thought sinners or profane, so as not to eat nor drink with them; and hence from the Hebrew word *haras*, which

which signifieth to separate, they had the name of Pharisees, which is as much as to say, Separatists. And though their chief separation was from the common people, whom they called *Am Haaratz*, i. e. the people of the earth, and reckoned them no other than as the dung thereof; yet by reason of their hypocritical pretences to greater righteousness than others, in the observance of the law, they drew the common people after them, they being above all others in their high esteem and veneration. This hypocrisy our Saviour frequently charges them with, as also with their making the law of God of none effect by their traditions: several of these traditions he particularly mentioned and condemned, as appears in the gospels; but they had a vast number more, and to go through them all would be to transcribe the Talmud, a book of twelve volumes in folio; for the whole subject of it is, to recommend and explain all those traditions, which this sect imposed to be received and observed; and though many of them are very absurd and foolish, and most of them very burdensome and heavy to be borne, yet this sect hath absorbed all the rest, they having for many ages none to oppose them among that people, saving only those few Karaites already and afterwards mentioned; for, excepting them only, the whole nation of the Jews, from the destruction of the temple to this present time, have wholly conformed to them, and received all their traditions for divine dictates, and to this day observe them with much greater regard and devotion than the written word itself: so that it is now only according to the traditions of the Pharisees, not according to the law and the prophets, that the present Jewish religion is wholly formed, whereby they have corrupted the old Jewish religion, just in the same manner as the Romanists have the Christian.

In conjunction with the Pharisees, the Scribes are often mentioned in the scriptures of the New Testament; but they were not a sect, but a profession of men following literature. They were of divers sorts: generally all that were any way learned among the Jews were, in the time of our Saviour and his apostles, called Scribes; and especially those who, by reason of their skill in the law and divinity of the Jews, were advanced to sit in Moses's seat, and were either judges in their sanhedrims, or teachers in their schools or synagogues. They were mostly of the sect of the Pharisees, most of the learning of the Jews in those times lying in their Pharisaical traditions, and in their way of interpreting (or we may rather say wresting) the scriptures by them: and they being the men that dictated the law both of church and state, hence Lawyers and Scribes are convertible terms in the gospels, and both of them there signify the same sort of men; for the same person, who by one evangelist is called a Lawyer, is by another said to be one of the Scribes.—To this account of the Pharisees, we shall add only one remark from another author: some great men of the church of Rome say, with a kind of boasting, that such as were the Pharisees among the Jews, such are the monastical orders among Christians. Much good may the comparison do them! we must confess ourselves so much of their mind, as to believe there is too great a conformity between them.

The next sect in order to be mentioned, is that of the Sadducees; as opposite to the Pharisees as possible, both in temper and principles. They had their name, according to Epiphanius and others, from a Hebrew word signifying righteousness, or justice. But the most common opinion is, that they were so called from Sadoc, the scholar of Antigonus of Socho, who was president of the sanhedrim, and master of the principal divinity school at Jerusalem, after the death of Simon the Just. This Antigonus was also the first of the Mishnical doctors, who taught the authority of oral tradition; and he gave rise by his lectures to the sect of the Sadducees: for having inculcated to his scholars, that they ought not to serve God with respect to the reward, but only out of that filial love and fear which they owed him, Sadoc and Baithus, two of his scholars, hearing this from him, inferred from hence, that there were no rewards at all after this life; and therefore, separating from the school of their master, they taught that there was no resurrection, nor future state, but that all the rewards that God gave to those that serve him were in this life only; and many being perverted by them into this opinion, they began that sect among the Jews which from the name of Sadoc were called Sadducees. This is the Talmudic story of their original, and what is commonly received concerning them: but it does not appear to be well founded; and the discerning Dr. Prideaux, upon this occasion, assures us, that Talmudic

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stories are with him of very little credit. Take this gentleman's account of the Sadducees in the following words :

The Sadducees at first were no more than what the Karaites are now, that is, they would not receive the traditions of the elders, but stuck to the written word only. How these traditions grew upon the Jews, I have already given a full account ; and the Pharisees being the grand promoters of them, they and the Sadducees hence became sects directly opposite to each other. As long as the Sadducees opposed them no farther than in this matter only, they were in the right ; but afterwards they imbibed other doctrines, which rendered them a sect thoroughly impious : for, first, they denied the resurrection of the dead, the being of angels, and all existences of the spirits or souls of men departed. Their notion was, that there is no spiritual being but God only ; that as to man, this world is his all ; that at his death body and soul die together, never to live more, and that therefore there is no future reward or punishment. They acknowledged that God made this world by his power, and governs it by his providence, and for the carrying on of this government hath ordained rewards and punishments, but that they are in this world only ; and for this reason alone was it that they worshipped him, and paid obedience to his laws. In sum, they were Epicurean Deists in all other respects, excepting only that they allowed that God made the world by his power, and governs it by his providence. But that they were not led into this impiety by Sadoc, the scholar of Antigonus, according to the story above, appears from the following instance : When John Hyrcanus deserted the sect of the Pharisees, and went over to the Sadducees, no other alteration is mentioned then to have been made by him in that change, but his rejecting and annulling all the traditional constitutions of the Pharisees ; which makes it probable that the Sadducees were at that time gone no further in the tenets of their sect, than to the denying of these constitutions. And moreover, Hyrcanus having the character of a just and religious prince, and all his actions speaking him such, it is not likely that he should embrace so impious a doctrine as that of denying the resurrection and a future state, especially when he was going into that state (for it was in the latter end of his life that this was done). All which put together, gives good reason to suppose, that this impiety had not then infected this sect : whenever it was introduced among them, this much we may be assured of, that vice and wickedness were the only causes of its birth ; and where-ever it is elsewhere found, it always has the same parents. When men live such lives, that they cannot render to God an account of them, they greedily lay hold of any scheme, how false and foolish soever, that may exempt them from it. Epicurus's brag was, that he had delivered the world from the fear of the gods ; and to lull asleep the conscience, and deliver men's minds from the fear of God, and his judgments, so as to be at liberty to sin on without reluctance or regret, is the only motive that induces any to be Epicurus's disciples ; and it is most likely that this impiety among the Jews had the same original. Under the Asmonean princes the Jews grew prosperous, powerful, and rich, and their riches produced great luxury and vice ; and to free their consciences from the fear of a future accounting for the enormities which grew up from this root, was the true cause that introduced this doctrine against a future state among them. This is confirmed from what Josephus writes of this sect ; he tells us, that they were men of quality and riches only that were of it : but since the generality of learned men admit the Talmudic story above mentioned, concerning the first introduction of this doctrine among them by Sadoc the disciple of Antigonus of Socho, I will enter into no further contest about it ; but having offered my conjectures to the contrary, I leave it to the reader to form his judgment about it as he shall see cause.

The Sadducees not only rejected all unwritten traditions, but also all the written word, excepting only that of the five books of Moses. And if it be true what the Talmudic story above mentioned relates, that Sadoc, on his first venting of his doctrine against a future state, was forced, for the impiety of it, to flee to the Samaritans for refuge, he might probably learn this part of his heresy from them : for they admitted only the five books of Moses, rejecting all the other parts of holy scripture, as well the prophets as the Hagiographa, or inspired writings. But it seems most probable

bable that the Sadducees rejected these books, because they found them inconsistent with their doctrine. There are many places in the prophets, and the Hagiographa which plainly and undeniably prove a future state, and the resurrection from the dead; and therefore having embraced the doctrine of denying both, they did what usually all heretics do, that is, reject, right or wrong, whatsoever made against them. Some learned men, and among them Scaliger for one, hold that they did not reject the other scriptures, but only gave a preference above them to the five books of Moses. But the account which is given in the gospels, of the disputation which Christ had with the Sadducees, plainly proves the contrary: for seeing there are so many texts in the prophets and Hagiographa, which directly prove a future state, and the resurrection from the dead, no other reason can be given why Christ waved all these proofs, and drew his argument only by consequence from what is said in the law, but that he knew they had rejected the prophets, and the Hagiographa, and therefore would admit no argument but from the law only. Their agreeing with the Samaritans in rejecting all traditions, and in receiving no other scriptures than the five books of Moses only, hath given an handle to the Jews to load the Samaritans with the imputation of agreeing with them also in the denial of a future state, and the resurrection from the dead; whereas in this article the Samaritans are found to be more than the Jews themselves, and so continue even to this day.

The third point of the Sadducees' heresy was about free-will and predestination. For whereas the Essenes held all things to be predetermined and fixed in an unalterable concatenation of causes never to be varied from; and the Pharisees allowed a free-will, in conjunction with predestination; the Sadducees, differing from both, denied all manner of predestination whatever; their doctrine being, that God had made man absolutely master of all his actions, with a full freedom to do either good or evil as he shall think fit to choose, without any assistance given him as to the one, or any restraint upon him for the other; so that whether a man doth good or evil, it is wholly from himself, because he hath it absolutely in his own power both to do the one and avoid the other: in fine, they held the same opinion among the Jews, that Pelagius did afterwards among the Christians, that is, that there is no help from God, either of his preventing grace, or his assisting grace; but that, without any such help, every man hath in himself full power to avoid all the evil which the law of God forbids, and to do all the good which it commands: and therefore, looking on all men to have this power in themselves, it is remarked of them, that whenever they sat in judgment upon criminals, they always were for the severest sentence against them; and indeed, their general character was, that they were a very ill-natured sort of men, churlish and morose in their behaviour to each other, but cruel and savage to all besides. Their number was the fewest of all the sects of the Jews, but there were men of the best quality and the greatest riches among them; and it is too often found, that they who most abound in the things of this world, are the forwardest to neglect and disbelieve the promises of a better. All those who were of the greatest power and riches among the Jews being cut off in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, this whole sect seems then to have perished with them; since we find no mention made of them as a sect in being for many ages after, till their name was revived again in the Karaites; of which sect we shall give some account a little lower.

We come next to the Essenes, who even outdid the Pharisees in the rigour of their observances: for, being originally of the same sect with them, they reformed upon them in the same manner as, among the Romanists, the Carthusians and the Cistercians have upon the Benedictines, and set up a much more severe, and perhaps a much more unblameable rule of living, than the others did. As to fate and free-will, their opinion was for an absolute predestination, agreeable to what is held by the Supralapsarians of the present age; without allowing to any man any free-will at all, or any liberty of choice in any of his actions. And as to the other grand point, of a future state and a resurrection from the dead, they also differed from the Pharisees herein: for, although they allowed the former, they denied the latter; their doctrine being, that the souls of men after their death are transmitted into a state of immortality, therein to live in everlasting bliss, or everlasting

everlasting woe, according as their actions have deserved, without ever any more returning either to their own or any other bodies for ever. Although our Saviour very often censured all the other sects then among the Jews, yet he never spoke of the Essenes, neither is there any mention of them through the whole scriptures of the New Testament. This proceeded, some think, from their retired way of living: for their abode being mostly in the country, they seldom came into the cities, nor were they in our Saviour's time ever seen at the temple, or in any public assembly; and therefore not falling in the way of our Saviour's observation, for this reason, say they, he took no notice of them. It is, however, much more likely, that being a very honest and sincere sort of people, they gave no reason for that reproof and censure which the others very justly deserved. Their way of living was very peculiar and remarkable: to give the reader a thorough view of it, the best way would be to lay before him the whole accounts of Josephus, Philo, and Pliny, who are the antientest authors that speak of this sect, and from whom is taken all else that is said of it. This has been done by Dr. Prideaux in the place above referred to, and that for peculiar reasons, which we shall by-and-by mention: but as these extracts are the longest of any in that author's works; and the Essenes are introduced rather to complete our system of the Jewish church, than to illustrate the gospel history, in which they are not at all mentioned; we must content ourselves with adding, to what has been here said, a very short abridgment of what is largely treated of by those antients, especially by Josephus and Philo, who, being Jews, could not but be well informed. This abstract has also in it some conjectures of the author from whom we have borrowed it.

“Passing by the various conjectures concerning the derivation of their name, which, when dressed up with all advantages, are still but bare conjectures, they began about the times of the Maccabees, when the violent persecutions of Antiochus forced the Jews for their own safety to retire to the woods and mountains. And though in time the storm blew over, yet many of them were too well pleased with these undisturbed solitudes ever to return, and therefore combined themselves into religious societies, leading a solitary and contemplative course of life, and that in very great numbers, there being usually above four thousand of them, as both Philo and Josephus tell us. They were remarkable above all others in this, that they lived without women, without any embraces, without money, conversing with nothing but woods and palm-trees. Their number increased every day as fast as any died, persons flocking to them from all quarters, to seek repose here, after they had been wearied with the inquietudes attending human affairs in public life. They paid a due reverence to the temple, by sending gifts and presents thither; but yet worshipped God at home, and used their own rites and ceremonies. Every seventh day they publicly met in their synagogue, where the younger being seated at the feet of the elder, one of them read some portions out of a book, which another, eminently skilled in the principles of their sect, expounded to the rest, instructing them in the rules of piety and righteousness, and all the duties that concerned God, their neighbours, and themselves. They industriously tilled and cultivated the ground; they lived upon the fruits of their own labours, and had all their revenues in common, there being neither rich nor poor among them. Their manners were very harmless and innocent, they being strict observers of justice beyond the practice of other people. What their principles were in matters of speculation, has been just now observed in brief; and more is not material to be inquired of, their institutions chiefly referring to practice. Out of a great regard to wisdom and virtue, they neglected all care of the body, and abstained very much from meats and drinks, some of them not eating for three, others for five or six days together; accounting it unbecoming men of such a philosophical temper and genius to spend any part of their time upon the necessities of the body. In fine, their contemplations were sublime and speculative, and of things above the ordinary notion of other sects, for they traded in the mysteries of angels, and in all their carriages bore a great shew of modesty and humility; for this reason some think they were the very persons whom St. Paul primarily designed, when he charged the Colossians to “let no man beguile them of their reward, in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.” His argument is, that, being dead to

the rudiments of the world, they should no longer be subject to such ordinances as forbid "to touch, taste, or handle; which were only the commandments and doctrines of men; which things," says he, "have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship and humility, and neglecting of the body, not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh." It must be confessed, that whether the apostle here meant a particular reflection upon the Essenes or no, he has in general terms condemned their manner of life to the professors of christianity. To this we will only add, that Philo divides the Essenes into two branches, both which he largely describes under the distinctions of practical and contemplative; but is peculiarly lavish in praising the latter."

Dr. Prideaux, after having quoted at large the relations of Josephus, Philo, and Pliny, concerning the Essenes, assures us, that his principal reason for so doing was, to obviate the wrong use that is made of these relations, first, by the Romanists, and, secondly, by the Deists. What he says on this occasion is worth our notice, and we ought not to omit so fair an opportunity of producing arguments against two sorts of persons, who are of all men the greatest enemies to the christian religion as established by Christ. And this we shall do from our author in a very few words.

"Eusebius, from Philo's account of the Therapeutæ, or contemplative Essenes, affirms, without judgment or truth, that they were christian monks of the order of St. Mark; and Bellarmine and Baronius, two of the greatest champions of the Popish cause, have from hence drawn an argument for the divine institution of Monkism. But if these two great men, who on other occasions are forward enough to condemn Eusebius, had been free from the interest and influence of their party, they would not have followed him in a particular the most absurd of all: for the words of Philo himself, which led Eusebius into this error, are a sufficient confutation thereof: First, They speak of these Therapeutæ as a sect of long standing in Egypt, and tell us, that they had hymns and writings among them of antient date, composed in times of old, by such as were principal leaders of their sect. Now from Philo's being an elderly man when he went ambassador to Caligula, it seems likely that the book, where he says this, was written before the christian church was erected; at most, it could not be many years after; which proves, that when he speaks of a sect of long standing, and of antient writings composed by the elders of that sect, he cannot mean any sect of christians, none of whom could be of above ten or twenty years standing. Secondly, he mentions their rigorous observance of the seventh day; which not only proves that they were not christians, but that they were Jews, they being the only people whom such a description can suit; and indeed Philo plainly tells us, in the introduction to his account of them, that they were disciples of Moses, which he would never have said of christians."

The truth is, Monkism among christians did not begin till the third century; for about the year of our Lord 250, one Paul, a young gentleman of Thebais in Egypt, to avoid the Decian persecution, fled into the adjoining desert; and, fixing his abode in a cave there, he thus began the practice of an ascetic life, in which he continued ninety years, being an hundred and thirteen years of age when he died. About twenty years after his retirement, Antony, another young gentleman, excited by the fame which Paul had acquired by his religious life, retired to the same desert, and there devoted himself to the like course. These being followed by many others, who were inspired with a like spirit of devotion, they were formed into a body by their leader, who became their abbot, and governed them many years. And from this beginning all the Monkism in the christian world had its original.

The Deists pretend to find an agreement between the christian religion and the documents of the Essenes, and therefore would infer that Christ and his followers were only a sect branched out from those religious Jews; but let them search to the utmost all the authentic accounts of the Essenes, and they will not be able to find among their precepts any of the proper doctrines of christianity. Is there any thing in them of the two christian sacraments? is there any thing of the redemption of the world by the Messiah? or of the erecting of his spiritual kingdom here on earth? were any of the peculiar usages of that sect ever ingrafted into christianity? Though the common tables, which were at
first

first set up by the apostles, bear some resemblance to those of the Essenes, yet these were never made a law of the christian religion, or so much as recommended by it, being only practised for a short time in the first gatherings of the church, but wholly discontinued when it increased and grew up. As to moral duties, the heathens as well as the Essenes practised and taught in most cases the same as the christians; and therefore nothing in favour of this opinion can be inferred from thence. Moreover, almost all that was peculiar to the Essenes, was in a lower degree condemned in the Pharisees by Christ and his apostles; such as their superstitious washings, and other over-rigorous observances; which, being carried higher by the Essenes, were in them more blameable according to the same principles of christianity. And then, contrary to the law of true christianity, they forbade marriage, which God had ordained from the beginning: but what was most of all, they denied the resurrection of the body, in which the main of the christian hope consists, and yet absurdly placed the felicity of a future life in the corporal enjoyments of temperate regions beyond the western ocean. When the institutions of this sect are compared with those of christianity, what argument of similitude can be found sufficient to prove that the former was parent of the latter?

The next sect of the Jews, which we are to describe, is that of the Herodians. They are mentioned more than once in the gospel, and doubtless had their name from Herod the Great, though upon what occasion is a question. Among many other conjectures, that of Calmet is, that they were the same with the followers of Judas Gaulonites, who arose in opposition to the taxation made by Augustus: but the opinion of Dr. Prideaux is quite contrary to this, and is as follows. As to the reason why they were called Herodians, this last-mentioned author tells us, that some say it was because they held Herod to be the Messiah; so Tertullian, so Epiphanius, so Jerom, so Chrysostom, so Theophylact, and so several others of the antients held. But it is very improbable that any Jews should, in the time of our Saviour's ministry, above thirty years after the death of Herod, hold him to have been the Messiah, when they had found no one of those particulars, which they expected from the Messiah, performed by him, but every thing quite the contrary. Others hold, that they were called Herodians because they constituted a sodality erected to the honour of Herod in the same manner as there were Sodalities at Rome, called Augustales, Adrianales, Antonini, constituted in honour of Augustus, Adrian, and Antoninus, and the like of other Roman emperors after their death. And this is the opinion of Scaliger, and those that follow him; but none of these sodalities at Rome having been instituted till long after the death of Herod, no such could have been instituted in honour of Herod in imitation of them. The earliest of these sodalities, and the first of this kind that we anywhere meet with, were the Sodales Augustales: but these not being instituted till after Augustus's death, which happened several years after Herod's, they could give no pattern or foundation for the like to be instituted in honour of Herod, either in his life-time or upon his death, since he died many years before. By what is mentioned of these Herodians in the gospels, they seem evidently to have been a sect among the Jews, differing from the rest in some points of their law and religion; for they are there named with the Pharisees, and in contradistinction from them, and therefore must have been a sect in the same manner as the Pharisees were; and they are also said to have a peculiar leaven, as the Pharisees had; that is, some false and evil tenets, which soured and corrupted the whole lump with which it was mingled, and therefore Christ equally warned his disciples against both. And since he calls it the leaven of Herod, this argues, that Herod was the author of it, that is, of those evil tenets which constituted this sect, and distinguished it from the other sects of the Jews; and that his followers, imbibing those tenets from him, were, for this reason, called Herodians. And these being chiefly of his courtiers, and the officers and servants of his palace, and those that were descended from them, hence the Syriac version, where-ever the word Herodians occurs in the original, renders it the domestics of Herod: and that version having been made very early for the use of the church of Antioch, the authors of it were nearest those times in which this sect had its beginning, and therefore had the best means of knowing who they were.

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Thus far therefore having shewn that these Herodians were a sect of the Jews that had its original from Herod the Great, it is next to be inquired into, what were the tenets whereby it was distinguished. The only way to find this out, is, to examine in what particulars the founder of it differed from the rest of the Jews; for no doubt the same were the particulars in which those his followers differed from them also, and thereby constituted this sect; and they will appear to have been these two following: the first, in subjecting himself and his people to the dominion of the Romans; and, secondly, in complying with them in many of their heathen usages; for many of these particulars Herod held lawful, and accordingly practised them. These, therefore, I take to have been the tenets and opinions in which these Herodians his followers differed from the other Jews, and thereby constituted this sect, which from him was called by that name. It being said, "One from among thy brethren shalt thou set King over thee, thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother;" hence an opinion arose, which was generally embraced by the Pharisees, that it was not lawful to submit to the Roman emperor, or pay taxes to him; but Herod and his followers, understanding the text only to exclude a voluntary choice, were of a contrary opinion, and held it lawful in this case both to submit to the Roman emperor, and also to pay taxes to him. And therefore the Pharisees and the Herodians being of opinion in this matter quite contrary to each other, those that laid snares for Christ, and sought an occasion against him, sent the disciples of both these sects at the same time together to propose this captious question to him, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or no?" thinking, which way soever he should answer, to bring him into danger: for, should he answer in the negative, the Herodians were there ready to accuse him of being an enemy to Cæsar; and should he answer in the affirmative, the Pharisees were as ready, on the other hand, to accuse him to the people, and excite them against him, as an enemy to their rights, they having possessed them with their notion against paying taxes to any foreign power: but Christ, knowing their intentions, gave such an answer as baffled the malice of both parties. However, the answer then given, implying a justification of the doctrine of the Herodians in that point, that could not be the leaven of Herod which Christ warned his disciples against; and therefore that must be their second tenet, that it was lawful, when forced and overpowered by superiors, to comply with them in idolatrous and wrong practices of religion. This Herod did, and he seems to have framed this sect on purpose to justify himself herein; for Josephus tells us, that to ingratiate himself with Augustus, and the great men of Rome, he in many things acted contrary to the law and the religion of the Jews, building temples, and erecting images in them, for idolatrous worship; and for this he excused himself to the Jews, telling them, that he did not do it willingly, but as commanded and forced to it by powers whom he was necessitated to obey, thinking this sufficient to excuse himself from guilt. For this reason we find him sometimes called an half Jew; and such half Jews I conceive were the Herodians, his followers, professing the Jewish religion, and at the same time on occasions complying with the idolatrous heathens, and becoming occasional conformists to them. The Sadducees, who denied a future state, mostly adopted the opinions of this sect, and therefore were reckoned one and the same with them; since the same persons, who in one of the gospels are called Herodians, are called Sadducees in another: but this sect after our Saviour's time vanished, and were no more heard of.

The sect of the Samaritans is still remaining in Samaria, Sichem, and other towns thereabouts, even at this day. They have the law of Moses in a character peculiar to themselves, and in a dialect very little, if at all, different from that of the antient Jews. These people are not however of the descendents of the Israelites, but of those nations which Esarhad-don brought from Babylon, and from Cutha, and from Avah, and Hamath, and Sepharvaim, to dwell in the cities of Samaria in the Israelites' stead, when these latter were carried thence into captivity; and for this reason the Jews call them by no other name than that of Cuthites (the name of one of these nations), and have that utter hatred and aversion to them, that, reckoning them among the worst of heretics, they express on all occasions a greater detestation of them than they do even of the Christians themselves.

These nations were, upon their settling in the cities of Samaria, much infested with lions, and the king of Babylon being told it was because they worshipped not the God of the country, he ordered that one of the priests who had been carried thence, should be sent back to teach these new inhabitants how to worship the God of Israel. But Him they only took hereupon into the number of their former deities, and worshipped jointly with the gods of the nations from whence they came; and in this corruption of joining their worship of their false gods with that of the true, they continued till the building of the temple on Mount Gerizim, in opposition to that of Jerusalem, when abundance of the Jews falling off to them, they reduced them to the worship of the true God only, in which they have ever since remained steadfast.

When the Jews, by the famous decree of Cyrus, returned to Judea after a captivity of seventy years, they refused the assistance of the Samaritans in the building of their second temple: whereupon these latter took all possible pains to obstruct the work, and, by corrupting the officers of Cyrus, prevailed so far, that the undertaking was discouraged for some time: at last a fresh decree being obtained from Artaxerxes Longimanus, not only the temple was completed, but the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt; but all this with so much opposition from the Samaritans, that there arose a mortal enmity between them and the Jews. In this last dispute the Samaritans were chiefly supported by one Sanballat, the governor of Samaria, who married his daughter to a son of the Jewish high-priest; and this man, finding he could not effectually hinder the Jews from restoring their religion to its former state, so far insinuated himself into the favour of Darius Nothus, the next king of Persia, that he obtained from him a grant to build on Mount Gerizim, near Samaria, a temple like that at Jerusalem, and to make his son-in-law Manasseh the high-priest thereof. And from this time Samaria became the common refuge and asylum of the refractory Jews; so that if any of them were found guilty of violating the law, as in eating forbidden meats, breaking the sabbath, or the like, and were called to account for it, they fled to the Samaritans, and found protection; by which means, after some time, the greatest part of that people were made up of apostate Jews, and their descendents. Soon after this followed a change in the Samaritan religion: for whereas they had hitherto worshipped the God of Israel in conjunction with their other gods, they now conformed themselves to the worship of the true God only, according to the rules of the law that was constantly read in their temple; and even some of the Jewish doctors acknowledge, that they were more exact herein than themselves, though at the same time they hated them above all the nations of the earth, both on account of their former opposition to the building of the temple, and because afterwards they were chiefly made up of apostates.

This hatred proceeded so far, that the Jews published an anathema against them, the bitterest that ever was denounced against any people. They not only forbid all communication with them, but declared all the fruits and products of their land, and every thing else of theirs, to be as swine's flesh, which none of their nation were ever to taste; they excluded all the Samaritans from ever being received as proselytes to their religion; and, lastly, debarred them from ever having any portion in the resurrection to eternal life, as if that also had been in their power. Ever since this, the conduct of the Jews towards the Samaritans hath been according to the tenor of this anathema, of which we have two remarkable instances in the gospel: the woman of Samaria demanded of our Saviour, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest water of me, who am a woman of Samaria?" for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." And in another place, when the Jews would express their utmost aversion to our Saviour, they said unto him, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil;" as if to be a Samaritan, and to have a devil, were things of equal import and reproach. In like manner the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus, when he reckons up the nations which were most detestable to the Jews, names the foolish people who dwelt in Sichem, to be those who were chiefly so.

The principal particulars in which the Samaritans differ from the Jews in their religion, are these which follow: 1. They receive no other scriptures than the five books of Moses, rejecting all the other writings that are in the Jewish canon. And these five books they still have among them in the Old Hebrew or Phœnician character, which was in use among

the Jews before the Babylonish captivity, and in which all the scriptures were written, till Ezra transferred them into that of the Chaldeans. It is indeed doubted by some, whether the Samaritans antiently absolutely rejected all the other scriptures besides the Pentateuch; and they found their opinion upon our Lord's discourse with the woman of Samaria above-mentioned, which proves that they had the same expectation of the Messiah as the Jews had, and this, they say, could be no-where clearly had but from the prophets. Perhaps, says Dr. Prideaux, though they read the Pentateuch only in their synagogues, yet antiently they might not have been without a due regard for the other sacred writings, whatever their sentiments of them may be at present. 2. The Samaritans antiently did, and still do, reject all traditions, and adhere to the written word only, in the observance of which they are more exact, as was above observed, than the Jews themselves. 3. They differ with them about the place of their worship; which matter is rightly stated by the Samaritan woman in St. John's gospel: "Our fathers," says she, "worshipped in this mountain, but ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." They imagine Mount Gerizim to be the place where Abraham and Jacob built altars to God, and where Joshua declared the blessings of God to the people, and erected the altar of twelve stones after his passage over Jordan; which altar they believe to be the very same upon which they sacrifice to this day. To support this opinion, they are accused of having corrupted certain texts of scripture which would otherwise have made against them, and for that reason their whole copy of the scriptures is of less authority than it would else have been. In fine, though the other Jews will not allow the Samaritans to be named as a sect of their religion, yet it appears that in reality they are so, and were even before the time of our Saviour; and for this reason they are treated of as such in the present discourse.

There were two more denominations among the Jews, which according to some, subsisted to the time of our blessed Lord; and these are the Caraites and the Zelotes, or Zealots. The name of the first comes from a Hebrew word, which signifies persons consummate in the study of the scripture and who adhere closely to the text and letter of it. This is indeed the distinguishing mark of the Caraites, and the great point of their opposition to the Rabbinites, who receive all the traditions of the elders. The Caraites are said to glory in a descent from Esdras, and to prove a long succession in their churches: but it is much more probable that they did not appear till about the eighth century of christianity, at least their sect was then restored by one Ananus, who opposed the Talmudists in their endeavours to establish the divine authority of their traditions. The Zealots were distinguished by this name, because they afterwards appropriated it to themselves, on pretence of their superior sanctity; though, in fact, of all men breathing, they lived the most abandoned lives; and directed the principal part of their rage against men of honour and courage, whom they persecuted with unexampled rigour and vengeance, particularly during the last siege of Jerusalem by the Romans. See Bradshaw's Josephus, Book IV. chap. iv. p. 496, 501.

Christ compared the sects of the Pharisees to leaven, because it swelled and puffed them up into a great opinion of their own sanctity, and soured them towards others that were not of their way. This he bids his disciples beware they were not deceived by, and to take heed of following their example.

2. He enjoins them to deliver his doctrine sincerely, and to abstain from all fraud and hypocrisy, both in their sayings and doings, seeing all things in their time shall be brought to light and made manifest before God and angels and men; therefore they ought to do all things uprightly and candidly according to the prescript of God's word, that their works may bear the light, as being done in God, John iii. 21. Luke xii. ver. 2, 3.

3. He bids them not be afraid of men, in publishing the true doctrine of their Lord and Master, which he inforceth by two arguments: First, The folly of running into a greater danger to avoid a less, "fearing those who can only kill the body, and not fearing him who can cast both body and soul into hell." Secondly, From the providence of God, which extendeth to the smallest things in the world, and to every event, and therefore in a more especial manner continually watches over them to preserve them (from ver. 4 to 8).

4. He

4. He shews, that they who own and profess him and his gospel before men, shall be owned by him at the day of judgment: but such as deny him here, shall, except they repent, be disclaimed by him hereafter, ver. 8, 9.

5. He declares, that such as speak against him, and deny him to be the Messiah, through ignorance and unbelief, it shall be forgiven them (when they repent, and effectually receive him), as Paul's blasphemy was, 1 Tim. i. 13. "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but obtained mercy, because," says he, "I did it ignorantly in unbelief." But they who attribute his works of power (his miracles, done visibly by the finger of God) to the working of the devil in him, and so blaspheme the Holy Spirit (by whose power he wrought those miracles), and this out of mere malice, knowingly and willingly, this sin (in so devilishly opposing the supernatural work of the Holy Ghost) he shews shall never be forgiven, because they that fall into it never repent, the Spirit withdrawing his grace from those who so maliciously oppose him and his work, and contumeliously reproach and speak evil of it, verse 10.

6. Lastly, he exhorts them not to be solicitous what to answer when they should be brought before the Consistories or Councils of the Jews, or the tribunals of heathen magistrates; for they should be instructed by the Holy Ghost at such times what they ought to say, ver. 11, 12.

While Jesus discoursed of these divine matters appertaining to salvation, one of the company (being more intent, as it seems, upon his temporal than his eternal concerns) desired him to speak to his brother, to divide the inheritance with him. To whom he replieth, "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" It is not within the compass of my calling, for I came to accomplish the work of man's redemption, and not to divide inheritances, which belongs to the civil magistrate, Luke xii. ver. 13, 14.

Then upon this occasion he admonishes all to beware of covetousness, the fountain of contention, "the love of money being the root of all evil," 1 Tim. vi. 10. For neither the continuance, nor the happiness of man's life, consists in the abundance of his wealth, which he further illustrates (shewing the vanity of riches without grace) by the parable of the rich man solacing himself in his wealth, and contriving to live still in security and plenty, not thinking of that sudden and unexpected change that came upon him, whereby he was taken from all his worldly delights, and his soul brought by the evil spirits before God's tribunal. And such, he shews, is the case of all graceless worldlings, that eagerly seek after riches, but not to be rich towards God in faith and good works (from ver. 15 to 22).

2. Christ teaches his disciples that they should not be anxiously careful and solicitous for the things of this life; as for meat, or cloaths, or the like; for "the life is more excellent, and of more value than meat, and the body than raiment; and God, who hath given them the greater, will not deny them the lesser, namely, such things as are necessary for the preservation of their lives. And to strengthen their faith, they might consider how he feeds the ravens, and cloaths the lilies, therefore certainly much more would he provide for them, made after his own image: neither would all their carking or caring avail them to any the least purpose, except God add his blessing. And if they cannot do the least things without God's assistance and blessing, why should they take thought for other things, that are greater, and in proportion harder? namely, to preserve their life and being; which depends upon the good pleasure of God alone. Their thoughts, therefore, should not be distracted and disturbed (driven this way and that way, like clouds in the air) with care about temporal necessities, the things that heathen people (who worship idols, and acknowledge not a divine providence) are anxiously solicitous about; but they should depend on God, who knows they have need of these things; and, as a tender Father, will take care to supply their wants in due time, as long as he affords them life. Their main care should be, to seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and for the necessities of this life, God will take care they shall be brought in unto them. And seeing their heavenly Father hath prepared for them an everlasting kingdom, he will not fail to allow them here their portion of those things that are useful for them, from ver. 22 to 33.

3. He

3. He exhorts them to alms-giving, and to be so far from distrusting the care of their heavenly Father over them, that in the case of extreme necessity, they should be willing to sell their goods to give to others, when there is no other way to relieve those that are to be relieved by them (which accordingly they afterwards did, as we read, Acts iv. 34.), and so by their charity to the poor they shall deposit riches in God's hands (who will bountifully repay them), and shall lay them up more safe and secure than the care of any worldly man can possibly do; and if they do thus lay up their treasure in heaven, by liberal alms-giving, their minds and affections will be drawn up thitherward; whereas if their treasures be here below in the things of this world, their hearts will be drawn down to them, ver. 33. 34.

4. He commands them to be very vigilant and diligent in their places, like good servants, who, with their garments girt up about them, and their lamps lighted, carefully expect the return of their Lord from a wedding-feast (which used to be kept by night), and whom their Lord will extraordinarily honour and reward for that their diligence: by which he intimates how highly he will reward in his celestial kingdom those faithful servants, and with what unspeakable love distribute his heavenly favours to them whom he finds diligent, and employed as he would have them, when he comes to call for them out of this world, even as if a Master should vouchsafe (though an unusual favour) to wait upon his own servants at the table. And by another similitude of a thief's secret and unexpected coming in the night, he shews they ought continually to be ready, and hourly to expect his coming, lest they should be surprised unawares (from ver. 35 to 41).

Simon Peter here steps in, and desires to know of him, whether he spake this parable only to them his constant attendants, or to all Christians: he directs his answer principally to them, as the teachers of his word, and dispensers of the spiritual food of the soul, injoining them faithfulness and prudence in the exercise of their function, in such a manner as may best tend to the conversion and edification of the people. And by a figure taken from men who prefer servants, whom they have found very faithful, to a higher dignity, namely, to be overseers of their whole estates (as Joseph was over Potiphar's, Gen. xxxix. 4, 6.) he points at the high degrees of glory, to which faithful ministers shall be exalted in the kingdom of heaven, above the ordinary members of the church, as is intimated, 1 Pet. v. 4. "When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." But he further tells them, that if any of them, like evil stewards, growing secure by the patience and forbearance of God, shall tyrannise over and oppress their fellow-servants, the Lord will cut off such impious servants, and separate them from the number and society of those that shall be saved, and will give them their portion with hypocrites and unbelievers. And in the same proportion as any servants have known their master's will more or less, or have had more or less committed to them, accordingly they shall be reckoned with by God (from verse 41 to 49).

5. Christ forewarns his disciples of persecution and trouble that would arise upon the preaching and publishing his gospel, which though in itself a doctrine of peace, yet, through the wickedness of men, and malice of Satan, would occasion the fire of divisions and calamities, and this will be a means of exploring and trying who are faithful, and who are not; and therefore he was so far from wishing this otherwise, that he rather desired it were already kindled and begun. But he himself was to bear the first part of it, to be immersed in most bitter afflictions (see Mat. xx. 22. Mark x. 38), and to undergo the cursed death of the cross; and till this were accomplished upon him, he was in great straits, terrified like a woman with child, with the apprehension of the pangs approaching (Mat. xxvi. 39), being very willing to be delivered, and to do and suffer that whereunto he was appointed. He further shews them, what intestine feuds, and quarrels, and divisions would arise concerning him and his gospel, soon after his death, which he foretells them of, that, when they came to pass, they might not be offended thereat (from ver. 49 to 54).

Lastly, directing his speech to the people, he tells them, that seeing they had many ways of presaging what weather it would be, which seldom failed them, he advised them to consider

consider the condition of this time, wherein happened so many signs of the presence of the Messiah (which is called afterward the time of their visitation, Luke xix. 44.) And to discern the judgments that are near approaching towards their nation, if they do not suddenly repent, and embrace him for the true Messiah; and therefore urges them to use the same prudence in divine matters, which they were to use in human worldly contentions. For in such cases, when they see an action coming against them, wherein they are sure to be cast, their best way is, presently to seek to reconcile their adversary, and make their peace with him, that so they may escape the danger: therefore they should be wise, and do so here (Matth. v. 25), and lay hold on the present opportunity of mercy now offered them, because it is a dreadful thing to die without reconciliation with God (from verse 54. to the end).

When Christ had spoken these things, there were some then present, that told him of certain Galileans (followers probably of Judas of Galilee, of whom Gamaliel makes mention, Acts v. 37. and who are reported to hold, "that no man is to be called Lord, and that the Jews ought not to pay tribute to the Roman Emperor), who having conspired, it seems, and entered into a league to vindicate their liberty, Pilate set upon them as they were sacrificing, and so mingled their blood with the blood of the beasts they offered. Our Saviour, discerning their thoughts, and how they concluded those to be the greatest sinners on whom such dreadful and outward punishments fell, corrects their erroneous opinion in this matter, shewing them that God doth not instantly smite all great sinners, but makes some examples that others may be warned; which he illustrates by another instance of those eighteen upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell, declaring that this is the use they ought to make of such examples, not too rigidly to censure such sufferers; but to remember, that the same judgments, or the like, hang over themselves, if by speedy repentance they prevent them not: and that he might the more excite them to take this course, and to bring forth such fruits as might evidence a true repentance, he sets forth God's long-suffering and patience towards them, by the parable of a barren fig-tree, which the master of the vineyard had for three years together expected fruit from, &c. intimating to them thereby, that God had given them space to repent, had sent his Son to dress and manure them, and if all this do not work upon them, there is nothing to be expected but destruction and extirpation.

Jesus now teaches in one of the synagogues of the Jews on a sabbath-day, and seeing a woman that had a sore disease inflicted on her by the devil for the space of eighteen years together, by which she was almost bowed together, and forced to stoop exceedingly, he called her unto him, and laying his hands upon her, immediately she was made strait, and glorified God. The ruler of the synagogue was hereat extremely offended that he had wrought this cure on the sabbath day; whereupon, Christ reproving him sharply for his hypocrisy, justifies himself in this action from their own practice in loosing their oxen and asses from the stall, on the sabbath-day, and leading them to water. From whence he infers, that it was much more reasonable that this woman, being descended of the stock of Abraham, and belonging to the covenant which God made with Abraham and his posterity, thus miserably bound eighteen years together with the bonds of Satan, in great affliction and distress, should be loosed from these bonds of the devil on that day. At this his adversaries were ashamed; and the people rejoiced for the power and mercy of God shining forth in these miracles wrought by him (from ver. 10, to 18).

Then, that he might animate and encourage those who seemed so affected with his miracles, and keep them from being offended at the mean and small beginnings of his kingdom, he compares the gospel (by which his kingdom is set up) to a grain of mustard-seed, which being one of the least seeds that are, yet in that country grows into a tree, with boughs large enough for birds to roost and lodge in: he also likens it to leaven, which quickly diffuses itself through the whole mass and lump, shewing, thereby, of what a spreading nature the evangelical doctrine would be, notwithstanding all the malice and opposition of devils and wicked men (from ver. 18 to 22).

Our Saviour having continued some time to preach in the villages and towns about Jerusalem, after he had departed from these at the feast of tabernacles, he now comes thither again, at the feast of dedication, which began on the five-and-twentieth of the month Chisleu, and lasted eight days, which fall out about the middle of our December. This feast was first instituted by Judas Maccabæus, when he had vanquished the forces of Antiochus Epiphanes, rebuilt the altar, and purged the temple by him profaned (as we find recorded, 1 Macc. iv. 59.) "Moreover Judas and his brethren, with the whole congregation of Israel, ordained that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year, by the space of eight days, from the five-and-twentieth day of the month Chisleu, with mirth and gladness. Jesus coming to the temple at this time (possibly to take the opportunity of the great concourse of people at the solemnity, to publish his doctrine), and walking in that part of it which was called Solomon's porch, gallery, or walk, in which the people used to meet, 1 Kings, vi. 3. the Jews came about him, and desired him to tell them plainly whether he were the Messiah, or no. He tells them, he had already cleared that matter abundantly, both by his doctrine and miracles, and had told them plainly enough who he was (John vi. 51, 53, 54, and chap. viii. 12, 24, 58. Luke xiii. from ver. 22, to 26).

Christ now points out to them the true cause of their infidelity, which was (not the obscurity of his doctrine, but) their not being of his sheep, that is, not as yet converted, ver. 26. And this he further proves by shewing they had not the properties of his sheep; for his sheep give themselves up to his teaching and direction, and follow him, and imitate him, and he hath an especial care of them, and love to them, ver. 27. And he gives them eternal life initial in this world, by infusing his grace into them, and carrying on a work of sanctification in their hearts, which is an earnest of that glory which is to follow (John v. 24. and John iii. 36.) He also takes care of their perseverance, till they come to a full possession of eternal life; so that neither Satan, nor the world, nor their own flesh or corruptions, shall pluck them out of his hand, or wrest them out of his power, ver. 28. He confirms this from his own and his Father's power, which is employed about them for their preservation, and which is above all opposition; and he joins his own power with the Father's in this work, because he and the Father are one in essence, and consequently have the same power and will; and therefore as none can pluck them out of the Father's hand, so none can pluck them out of his, ver. 29, 30. Upon this answer the Jews attempt to stone him (as they had done before). Hereupon he upbraids them for dealing so with him, and rewarding him evil for the many good works he had wrought among them. But they alleged it was for blasphemy that they were angry with him, in that he, being (as they supposed) a mere man, had declared himself to be true God, equal with the Father. Our Saviour, by two arguments, vindicates himself from the imputation of blasphemy.

1. Because the Old Testament (which was their law and rule, and which cannot be contradicted or denied) gave to magistrates and judges the title of gods, as Ps. lxxxii. 6. "I have said, ye are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High." Upon which ground he argues, not barely that he may call himself God in the same sense that they are so called, but he reasons from the less to the greater, thus: If they may be called gods to whom God speaks in that psalm, namely, judges and magistrates (as being God's vicegerents, and bearing some stamp of his authority and dominion), much more is it due to him, who being from eternity with the Father in heaven, was sanctified, separated, and ordained for a mediator, king, and head of his church; which office cannot be assumed or executed by any mere creature, but only by the eternal Son of God, who, being first consecrated to this office before he was sent into the world, did certainly subsist and was, before his incarnation. And being the Son of God, all the gods must worship him, even angels as well as rulers and magistrates, as is enjoined, Ps. xcvi. 7.—"Worship him all ye gods," and, Heb. i. 6. "And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, Let all the angels of God worship him," ver. 13. "But to which of the angels, said he, at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool," (from ver. 31, to 37.)

2. He proves it no blasphemy to call himself God, because he did those divine and miraculous works, which flow from that power which is common to him with the Father; and therefore they ought, by these works, to be led to acknowledge and believe him to be the true God, one in essence with the Father, and that, however the person of the Son be distinct from the person of the Father, in respect of order or subsistence, of properties, and order of working, yet the divine essence is undivided, and there is a mutual inexistence of one person in the other, so that the Father is in him, and he in the Father, and the Father and he are one. Ver. 37, 38.

The Jews hearing these things, attempt again to seize upon him, but he escapes out of their hands, and goes to Bethabara beyond Jordan, whither many resorted to him; and finding that he so much surpassed John Baptist (who never wrought any miracle among them), and that John's predictions concerning him were true, many there believed on him (from ver. 39 to the end).

Whilst Christ abode at Jerusalem, a certain man moves a curious question to him, concerning the number of those that should be saved, whether it should be great or small. To whom our Saviour gives no direct answer, but instead thereof turns his speech to the people, and exhorts them to "strive to enter in at the strait gate;" intimating, that the number of those that shall be saved will be but small, in comparison of those that will be eternally lost. This he more plainly expresses, Mat. vii. 13. "Enter ye in at the strait gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat (ver. 14.) Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." And therefore he advises them not to follow the example of the multitude, who neglected the present opportunity and season of grace, and afterwards could not find admission, when the gate of grace and salvation was once shut, ver. 23, 24. This he further illustrates by an elegant comparison of a master of a family, who, having invited guests to his house, sits before his door expecting them; when some are come (perceiving he does but in vain expect the rest), he rises up and enters in with those that are come to the feast, and then shuts the door; and if any of those loitering persons, that were invited, come afterwards, and knock ever so earnestly, he takes no notice of them, and refuses to let them in: hereby he represents to the Jews the great danger they were in, if they neglected the present season of grace now offered to them, and shews them how little it would profit them, at the day of judgment, to allege they had eaten or drunken in his presence on the earth, or had heard him preach, &c. nay, had been by him enabled to work miracles, Mat. vii. 22. except they now forsake their sins, and really believe in him. He tells them, that then it will be a most heart-cutting grief to them, to see the patriarchs and prophets, and other Jews in celestial bliss, and themselves cast out; nay, it will aggravate and increase their torment, to see some of the Gentiles from all quarters and nations (whom they thought accursed) to be received into the kingdom of heaven, and themselves excluded. Lastly, he adds, that the Gentiles, which were some time afar off, and aliens from the common-wealth of Israel, shall receive and embrace the gospel; while the Jews, for their impenitence, obstinacy, and unbelief, shall be cast off (from ver. 25, to 31).

Our Lord being now come back, it seems, into Galilee, and instructing the people, and doing miracles there, some of the Pharisees being unwilling the people should thus see his power, and hear his doctrine, were very desirous to have him gone; and, for a pretence, suggested to him the danger he was in from Herod, if he should stay any longer in that place which was under Herod's jurisdiction. But Christ flights the danger, bidding them go tell Herod, that crafty fox, that he cast out devils, and cured diseases for the present, and after a while, when his work was finished, he was to suffer death, and be offered up for the perfecting man's redemption. In the mean while no power or malice of man could hinder him from doing the work he had to do, in that small part of his life which yet remained. It is true, he intended to depart thence, but not for fear of Herod: there was no danger of Herod's killing him; for
Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was the place where he was to die, seeing a prophet could not be legally tried but by the great council there. And having intimated that he must be put to death there, he takes occasion from thence to break out into a most passionate rebuke of Jerusalem, both for her shedding the blood of the prophets, as also for her obstinacy in refusing to hearken to his frequent calls and invitations to repentance. And, lastly, threatens the utter desolation both of temple and city; intimating, that he would come no more thither, till his last coming up.

Christ being invited to dine with one of the chief of the Pharisees on the Sabbath day, at which entertainment there were several other Pharisees and Lawyers, who diligently observed his words and behaviour, that they might find something to accuse him of, he there heals a man who had a dropsy. Our Saviour formerly healed many infirm persons that sought to him themselves, or some of their friends for them; but here he heals one that neither by himself, nor any other, implored his help; so free was his mercy and grace towards helpless and afflicted mortals! Having cured him, he defends the lawfulness of the act from their own pity to their beasts, to pull them out of a pit on the sabbath day (from Luke xiv. verse 1, to 7).

Then observing how the guests there present, particularly the Pharisees and doctors of the law, affected precedence and taking place (the effect of pride, and occasion of many breaches of charity), he labours to cure them of this tumor of ambition, and, under the coverture of a civil precept, exhorts them to true humility before God and man, to be little in their own eyes, 1 Sam. xv. 17. and in lowliness of mind "to esteem others better than themselves," Phil. ii. 3. which hath a promise annexed to it of being certainly exalted (from ver. 7. to 12).

Having thus instructed the guests, he now directs his speech to the Pharisee that invited him (who, it seems, he observed, invited only the rich, and persons of quality, passing by the poor), and exhorts him not to feast only his friends, kindred, or rich neighbours, out of a vain-glorious ostentation, or expecting a requital from them, but rather the poor and impotent; and though they could not requite him, yet God, of his free grace, would abundantly recompense it to him (if he did it in a right manner, and for right ends) at the day of judgment. So that civil courtesies and entertainments of kindred and friends, for the maintaining and preserving love and concord, are not hereby forbidden (the lawfulness whereof may appear from Gen. xxi. 8. and ch. xliii. 25. Job i. 4.), but the practice of the Pharisees is condemned, who neglected the poor and needy, whom they ought to have relieved (from ver. 12, to 25).

One of the persons who sat at meat with our Saviour, hearing him speak of being "recompensed at the resurrection of the just," repeated that known saying among the Rabbins, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God;" by which they understood, "shall be partaker of the joys of heaven." To whom for answer he utters the parable of the great supper, and the several excuses made by those who were invited, intimating to all present, that though they seemed greatly to prize the kingdom of God, yet the love of the world, the profits and pleasures thereof, and its numerous avocations and employments, would hinder them from hearkening to the gracious invitations and calls of God by his ministers, and from embracing the doctrine of the gospel, and so exclude them from heaven; nevertheless God would furnish himself with guests, even of the most despicable among the Jews, and of the miserable Gentiles, drawing them by the powerful instances of his word, and the effectual motions of his Spirit, to embrace the Gospel, though the generality of the Jews, the principal designed guests, by slighting and neglecting the invitation, would perish by their own obstinacy and unbelief.

Christ now perceiving great multitudes to follow him, and knowing with what unsound minds many of them did it, plainly tells them, that all who will be his disciples in good earnest, must prefer him above all others, though ever so near and dear unto them; and that "he that loveth father and mother more than him, is not worthy of him: and he that loveth son and daughter more than him, is not worthy of him," Mat. x. 37. That life itself (if the glory of God require it) is to be laid down as a sacrifice for him and his gospel.

gospel; "For whosoever," taking a contrary course, "shall seek to save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, shall save it," Mark viii. 35. That they who will undertake his discipleship, must have minds seriously prepared to part with all, rather than renounce him; and must be ready and willing, after his example and for his sake, to take up their crosses, and to suffer persecution and affliction. And that they may not shrink, or start aside in the day of trial, he advises them to cast up beforehand what a real profession of christianity may cost them: as, for instance, a man that intends to build a tower, must first consider whether he be able to defray the charges thereof; and as a king that goes to war with another king, must first consider whether he hath a power sufficient to fight him, or no, and is provided with all necessaries for such an undertaking. These things he foretells them of, as requisite to be considered by them, before they enter into his discipleship, that they may not rashly undertake it. And he further tells them, that having once listed themselves for his disciples, they must labour to express the power of his doctrine in the holiness and purity of their conversation, and in zeal for his honour and glory; and must be as the salt of the earth, good and savoury in themselves, and by their example and good exhortations must endeavour to season others with the salt of grace. But if these things be not in them, and they relapse from their profession, they will be like salt that hath lost its savour, good for nothing, and so, being unfavoury in themselves, they will be useless and unprofitable to others.

Our blessed Lord had some time before invited all that were weary and heavy laden to come unto him; and had declared, that they who, being invited to the celestial supper, and refused to come, should never taste of it. Hereupon many publicans (namely, all those who were thereabouts) and other sinners now come unto him (as sick persons to a physician) to hear his doctrine, and receive instruction from him. The scribes and Pharisees, who were puffed up with a vain opinion of their own righteousness, take offence at this, and calumniate him for admitting sinners into his company, and eating with them. Hereupon he declares God's tender care for the recovery of poor lost sinners, and how ready he is to receive any that repent and return: and how they, who are truly converted themselves, are so far from envying the conversion of others, that they heartily rejoice at it. All which he sets forth in three eminent parables.

I. *The Parable of the LOST SHEEP.*

First, Of a man, who, though he hath many sheep, yet if he lose one, will diligently seek it, and having found it, rejoices, and carries it home upon his shoulders, and calls upon his friends to rejoice with him. Thereby declaring how God, and the holy angels in heaven rejoice (as joy is taken for an affection arising from some fresh and new good) for one sinner that repents, and recovers from his fall, and returns from his wandering, more than for many righteous persons, which went not so astray, as in Mat. xviii. 13, but, having continued in the right way, need no repentance as to such a particular exorbitancy: just as a father is touched with a more sensible joy for the recovery of one of his sons, who was dangerously sick, than for the health of all the rest, who were in no such danger, though he love all his children very well, and desires the health and prosperity of them all (from Luke xv. ver. 1, to 8).

II. *The Parable of the LOST GROAT.*

Secondly, Of a woman lighting a candle and seeking diligently her lost groat; which having found, she rejoices, and invites others to rejoice with her for it. As people usually rejoice more at the finding of one thing they gave up (in a manner) for lost, than for many other such things which they securely enjoy. The scope of this parable is the same with the former, ver. 8, 9, 10.

III. *The Parable of the LOST SON.*

Thirdly, Of a father graciously receiving and rejoicing at the return of his prodigal son, which

which his other son repined at. In the two former parables are held forth the great pains and care Christ takes for the recovery of lost sinners. In this is shewed with how much readiness, willingness, and gladness our heavenly Father receives repenting and returning sinners. By the Father, therefore, we are to understand God; by the prodigal son, all sorts of sinners; by the other son, the scribes and Pharisees, who, presuming on their own merits and righteousness, and being as high-minded as if they had never sinned, and as unthankful, as if God had never done any thing for them worthy of their service, as is intimated, ver. 29. murmured at Christ for conversing with sinners, though to bring them to repentance; which graciousness and mercy they should have been so far from being discontented at, that it should have been matter of great rejoicing to them (from ver. 11. to the end).

IV. *The Parable of the UNJUST STEWARD.*

Fourthly, Christ propounds to his disciples and followers, the parable of a rich man, who, being informed of the unfaithfulness of his steward, called him to give up his accounts, resolving to put him out of place. Hereupon the steward cunningly and politicly contrived to make himself friends aforehand among his master's debtors, that they might receive him into their houses, by giving unto them his master's goods. This coming to his master's knowledge, he commends the wit and policy (though not the falseness and injustice) of his servant, thus to provide for himself against the future; shewing that worldly men are commonly more provident for their own generation, and to make provision for themselves for the remainder of their frail life here, than pious men are to provide for their eternal happiness. The scope of the parable therefore is, to shew that men are but stewards of the goods, riches, and other gifts they have received from God; therefore to him they must be accountable for them. That they ought to employ them in such a way as may tend to his glory, the good of others, and their own comfort; and particularly, that they ought to distribute to the poor, and so use a prudent and careful providence for their future eternal safety and bliss, when God by death shall take from them their stewardship. For if the unjust steward made himself friends, by giving them his master's goods (who were ready thereupon to receive him into their houses, when he was turned out of his office), much more shall they be received into everlasting habitations above, who, in conjunction with other graces, are free in distributing to the poor according to their ability, especially God's poor, who will pray for them here, and hereafter bless them before God, and bear witness of their charity and liberality shewed unto them; so that by liberal almsgiving, and distributing of their mammon to the poor, they shall (as it were) make to themselves friends, to receive them into the glorious mansions of heaven: not that they shall merit so as to find favour with God by their alms; but of his free mercy, according to his promise, he will reward them for their liberality (from Luke xvi. ver. 1, to 10).

And having shewed them the benefit they shall reap, if they be faithful in a right use of those temporal good things which God hath intrusted them with, he now shews them the detriment and damage that will redound to them if they do otherwise. For as it is ordinarily seen among men, he that is found unfaithful in a little, will not be trusted with much; but he that hath approved himself trusty in a little, will be trusted with much; so, if they use secular things well, and in a right manner (whereof God hath made them stewards for a time), he will give unto them heavenly and eternal riches, ver. 10. But if they be not faithful in a right expenditure of their temporal riches (which are but perishing and deceitful), how can they hope that God will intrust them with the spiritual and heavenly, which are true riches? ver. 11. And if they be not faithful in those external good things which God intrusts them with but for a time, to use not only for themselves, but for the good of others also, and which they must afterwards leave to others, how can they expect that God will give them those spiritual good things, which are never taken away from them to whom they are given, and which always profit them, and never leave them? ver. 12.

And that they might be more at liberty to practise these duties of charity and beneficence, to which he had been exhorting them, he further cautions them to take heed of earthly-mindedness, and the love of the world, and setting their hearts too much upon riches: for no man can serve two such contrary masters, as God and Mammon are; he that serves riches, and makes wealth his God, is an idolater, and will have his heart drawn away from the true God, ver. 13.

The covetous Pharisees (who, it seems, thought few men happy but they that were rich) derided this doctrine. Whereupon he sharply reproves the professors of this sect for their horrible pride, hypocrisy, and affectation of the opinion and esteem of men; shewing them, that "many things that are highly esteemed among men, are abominable in the sight of God," ver. 14, 15.

And this perverseness and obstinacy of theirs was the more culpable, because they lived in such times wherein the gospel was preached, and the evangelical administration, begun by John's ministry, was carried on by the Messiah himself. For before John's preaching and baptizing, the prophets foretold, and the ceremonial law prefigured, the coming of the Messiah; but John pointed him out, and shewed him to be then come, and that his spiritual kingdom was begun. And since his gospel, whereby his kingdom is set up, began to be preached and proclaimed, multitudes of people with ardent affections, and zeal, ran to it, and embraced it, pressing into the kingdom of the Messiah, and seeking after salvation by him with as great earnestness as they who by force seek to take a town; yet, notwithstanding this great efficacy of the gospel upon others, they, the scribes and Pharisees, neglected and despised it, ver. 16.

However, lest while he spake thus highly of the gospel, they should calumniate him (as they often had done) as a destroyer of the law, he shews, that as all that was heretofore signified and prefigured by the ceremonial law should certainly be accomplished, so the moral law should still continue in force, which (for all their pretended zeal for the law) was by them violated, as particularly the seventh commandment, which they brake by permitting and practising divorces upon unjustifiable grounds (see Mat. v. 31, 32) ver. 17, 18.

Then returning again to the argument he was upon before, namely, concerning the right use of riches, under the parabolical history of the rich man and Lazarus, he declares, that in the life to come the godly poor shall be most inconceivably happy, when the unmerciful graceless rich shall be most remedilessly miserable; and that warnings from the dead will not work upon them whom the word of God (which is of divine authority) does not persuade and bring to obedience.

CHAPTER X.

DESCRIPTION OF JERUSALEM, ANCIENT AND MODERN. CHRIST'S TRANSFIGURATION. THE TEN LEPERS HEALED BY CHRIST. HE FORETELLS THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM, &c. EARNEST PRAYER RECOMMENDED. PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN. AGAINST UNLAWFUL DIVORCES. CHRIST RECEIVES AND BLESSES LITTLE CHILDREN. THE COVETOUS YOUNG MAN ANSWERED, AND REPROVED. HUMILITY ENJOINED. PARABLE OF THE HOUSEHOLDER. CHRIST RAISES DEAD LAZARUS TO LIFE: PART I.

HERE it may not be amiss to give our readers a history of JERUSALEM, with the changes it has undergone, and also its present state and condition.

The city of Jerusalem, the capital of Judæa, was the scene of many of the remarkable passages of the life of our blessed Redeemer. Cana, Capernaum, Tyre, and Sidon, were also rendered famous by being honoured as the places of residence of our Saviour. Some account of these, and other towns and countries mentioned in the evangelical writings, we presume will not be unacceptable to our readers, since we have several times already had occasion to mention these places; and since in the prosecution of this work, we shall often find ourselves under the like necessity.

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The ancient names of the capital of Judæa (called by the Greeks and Romans Solyma and Hierosolyma) were Jebus and Salem. By the Hebrews it was called Jeruschalaim, or Jeruschelem, signifying, according to Calmet, the vision of peace, or the possession or inheritance of peace.

It cannot be easily ascertained to what particular tribe Jerusalem originally belonged; for we read, that Joshua gave it to the tribe of Benjamin, after he had slain the king of Jerusalem, at the famous battle of Gibeon. By what means the natives again obtained possession of the place, and why the Benjamites did not intirely expel them, we are wholly at a loss to decide: but it is certain, that, soon after the decease of Joshua, the place was partly, at least, restored to the Jebusites, and that it remained in their possession till the time of David.

On the other hand, it appears that this city was within the division of the tribe of Judah, when we read the following texts: "As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day," Joshua xv. 36. "Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire." Judges i. 8. "David took the strong-hold of Zion: the same is the city of David," 2 Sam. v. 7. David, who was of the tribe of Judah, was no sooner acknowledged king, than he marched against, and subdued Jerusalem, and there established the seat of his kingdom. The psalmist makes Jerusalem a part of Judah, when he says, "The Lord chose not Ephraim, but the tribe of Judah and mount Sion." To reconcile these texts, it may be said, that, being upon the frontiers of the two tribes, Jerusalem sometimes made a part of one, and sometimes a part of the other; and that, though Benjamin might have the greater right to it, according to the division of Joshua, yet it belonged to Judah by right of conquest, it having been thrice subdued by that tribe.

Jerusalem is mentioned by Herodotus under the name of Cadytis. Speaking of the expedition of Necho, and the battle he fought at Megiddo, or, as he calls it, Megdolum, where Josiah was slain, he says, that, after the victory there obtained, he subdued the great city of Cadytis, which he describes as a mountainous city in Palestine, of equal magnitude with Sardis in Lydia, which, in those days, was the principal city of the Lesser Asia. The place described under the name of Cadytis, could be no other than Jerusalem, which was situated in the mountains of Palestine, and which was the only place that could be mentioned in comparison with Sardis. That, after the battle above-mentioned, Necho subdued Jerusalem, is evident from scripture. "And the king of Egypt made Eliakim, his brother, king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother, and carried him to Egypt."

The capital of Judæa is not mentioned either in the scriptures, or by Josephus, under the name of Cadytis: but that it was so called in the time of Herodotus by the Syrians and Arabians, will be clearly evident from the following considerations. By the eastern nations, Jerusalem is to this day called by no other names but such as perfectly correspond in signification with the word Cadytis. They distinguish Jerusalem by the appellation of Al-kud, which word, like Cadytis, signifies holy. From the time of the construction of the temple by Solomon, Jerusalem became the common place of resort for religious worship to the children of Israel; and thence it obtained the epithet of holy. In the Old Testament it is called Air Hakkadosh, that is, the holy city, or the city of holiness; and similar instances are to be found in several parts of the New Testament. The same title was given to the Jewish coin; for the inscription upon their shekels, was, "Jerusalem Kedushah," or Jerusalem the holy. This coin passing current in the neighbouring nations, it caused the words of the inscription to be widely dispersed, and the city to be distinguished by both, or either of them indifferently. For the sake of brevity, and the facility of pronunciation, Kedushah alone grew into almost general use; as did Kedutha among the Syrians, who were accustomed to change the Hebrew *sh* into *th*.

The Hebrew was not in use as a vulgar language after the Babylonish captivity; and in the time of Herodotus, the Syriac was the only language spoken in Palestine; and in that dialect, when he travelled through the country, he found it called Kedutha; to which word giving a Greek termination in his history, he named the city of Jerusalem Cadytis. For the same reason that it was called Kedusha in Palestine, and Kedutha in Syria, the Arabs called it Bait Almokdes, signifying the Holy Building, or the Holy City; and these people also used another adjective of the same root and signification, calling the place Bait Alkuds; and at length they distinguished it simply by the word Alkuds, or the Holy; and by this name it is still called by the Turks, Arabs, and all other Mahometan nations in that quarter of the world.

The city of Jerusalem was situated upon a rocky eminence: it was almost surrounded by other mountains at no considerable distance, and therefore had the appearance of being in the midst of an amphitheatre. On the east was Mount Olivet, being separated from the city by the valley of Jehosaphat, which also bounded part of the north; on the south was the valley of Gehinnon, beyond which rose the mountain of Offence; and on the west, it was fenced with the valley of Gihon, and the adjoining mountain.

In the days of our Saviour, the city was divided into four parts, separated by walls stretching east and west. That part next the south, overlooking the others, and including Mount Sion, was called the Upper City, but its former name was the City of David. In the midst hereof, David constructed a strong and magnificent castle, which was the residence of the succeeding sovereigns. In the west corner, and upon the wall, stood the tower of David. Here king Herod built a superb palace, containing two houses under one roof, to which he gave the names of Cæsar and Agrippa: and the ornaments of this place were more costly and magnificent than those of the temple.

The lower city, which abounded with inhabitants, according to some writers, was named the Daughter of Sion. On the east of Sion, upon Mount Moriah, stood the glorious temple of Solomon; and between that superb building and Mount Sion, was his palace, which communicated with the temple by means of a high bridge; and near this palace was that of the queen, and the house of the grove of Libanus. On a high rock, west of the temple, stood the palace of the Maccabees, which commanded a prospect of the whole city. This edifice was rebuilt by king Agrippa, who made it his usual place of residence. Near this structure stood the theatre built by Herod, and enriched by a number of exquisitely finished pictures, expressive of the conquests, trophies, and triumphs of Augustus. Against the south corner of the temple stood the Hippodrome, also erected by Herod, wherein he instituted divers exercises in honour of the emperor. In the decline of life, when he supposed he could not long survive, he caused the chief people among the Jews to be shut up, in order to be massacred in the Hippodrome immediately after his decease; that, notwithstanding his character was held in universal abhorrence, his death might be accompanied by a general lamentation!

Within the west wall of the city was Mount Acra, on which steep and rocky spot was a citadel erected by Antiochus, and razed by Simon, who also lowered the extraordinary height of the mount, that it might not surpass the altitude of the temple. Upon this spot, Helena, queen of Adiabeni, built a palace. Being converted from Paganism to the Jewish persuasion, she abandoned the seat of her empire beyond the Euphrates, and established her residence in Jerusalem. She afterwards embraced Christianity; and during the famine which was predicted by Agabus, and happened in the reign of Claudius Cæsar, she greatly alleviated the distresses of the Christians, by supplying them with corn, which she caused to be purchased and brought from Egypt. Near the gate of Ephraim without the city, was the sepulchre of queen Helena, which had three pyramids. In the days of Eusebius this sepulchre was entire.

On the north side of Acra was the amphitheatre of Herod, a superb building, sufficiently spacious to contain eighty thousand people: near this building were the common hall, and the courts of justice.

Nearly adjoining to the north side of the temple, situated upon a steep rock, fifty cubits high, was the tower of Baris, belonging to the priesthood of the Asmonæan race.

But when Herod came to possession of the sovereign power, he considered that the place whereon the tower of Baris stood, would be extremely convenient for commanding the whole city, and therefore constructed upon that spot a large and strong castle, having at each of the four corners a tower, two of which were seventy, and the others fifty cubits high. In order to conciliate the favour of Antonius, Herod gave the name of Antonia to this castle. Here the Romans had a strong garrison constantly upon duty, in order to prevent any opposition to their authority from the Jews. On the north side of Antonia was a communication with the house of the Roman president, by means of a gallery which crossed the highway.

The third division of the city was but narrow, its whole length being only about equal to the breadth of the part last described. The west end was intirely occupied by the magnificent palace of Herod, containing within its walls delightful groves, gardens, pools of water, fish-ponds, and other places of entertainment and exercise. On the south-east corner of the wall stood the tower of Mariamne, an edifice of the most exquisite workmanship, built in commemoration, and bearing the name of the queen of Herod, by whom she was put to death in a transport of groundless jealousy. On the south-west corner was the tower of Phasaëlis, a remarkably strong building, being seventy cubits in height, and in form resembling the tower of Pharos. On the north wall stood the tower of Hippicus, which was erected in memory of the Hippici, the two brothers who were slain in battle. In this division were the houses of many of the prophets; and likewise that of Mary, the mother of John-Mark.

The fourth division of Jerusalem was more to the north than the part last described: it was originally a suburb, and the part where the inferior tradesmen and mechanics resided. The outer wall hereof was rebuilt by king Agrippa with surprising strength on that side, where alone the city was assailable. The height of this wall was twenty-five cubits, and it was fortified by ninety towers, standing at the distance of two hundred cubits from each other. The spot whereon stood this division, which was called the New City, as well as a part of that adjoining, is not within the present walls of Jerusalem.

The city of Jerusalem remained in the possession of the Jebusites during the times of Moses, Joshua, the Judges, and till the reign of David. After the decease of Joshua, it came under the government of the children of Judah: but they were either unable to defend their conquest, or only subdued the lower town, leaving the citadel in the hands of the Jebusites, who are said to have been masters of Jerusalem, either wholly or in part, for the space of eight hundred and twenty-four years. So confident were they in the supposed impregnability of the port, that, when besieged by king David, they placed their blind, lame, and other invalids upon the walls, to shew their contempt of his power. David, however, subdued Mount Sion, and having driven out the Jebusites, and removed from Hebron, established the seat of his empire in that city; which having much enlarged, and rendered surprisingly magnificent, he named the City of David. From this time, if not before, the name of Jebus began to lose itself in Jerusalem, the letter *r* being substituted in the room of *b*, for the sake of a more agreeable sound.

So many great and beautiful works were added by Solomon, that Jerusalem became the most magnificent city of the East. Under the reign of Rehoboam, the son and successor of Solomon, it was taken and plundered by Shishak king of Egypt, who carried away all the treasures of the temple and the royal palace, which had been constructed, enriched, and embellished by Solomon at an amazing expence.

During the reign of Jehoash, this city was besieged by Hazael, king of Syria; but this prince consented to accept a large sum by way of ransom. To procure the money demanded for the redemption of the city, Jehoash confiscated the treasures of the temple, and of the royal palace.

But notwithstanding the gratuity he had received, in the following year he treacherously sent an army to invest the city a second time; and a desperate battle ensued, in which the troops of Judah were defeated, and several of her most distinguished princes and warriors slain; and at this time Jehoash himself was lingering under a painful illness. Some time after this, Amaziah, the son and successor of Jehoash, having rashly declared war against Jehoash

Jehoash king of Israel, the arms of the latter prevailed, and he made a prisoner of war of the king of Judah, plundered the city and temple of Jerusalem, and destroyed the wall to the extent of four hundred cubits. "And Judah was put to the worse before Israel, and they fled every man to their tents. And Jehoash king of Israel, took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash, the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shehem, and came to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, from the gate of Ephraim, unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits. And he took all the gold, and the silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria."

About two hundred years after this, Josiah being slain at Megiddo, Pharaoh Necho entered Jerusalem, and took Jehoahaz, whom the people had chosen as the successor of his father in the sovereignty, and carried him into Egypt, where he died. It does not appear from the scriptural writings, that Necho plundered either the city or temple: but he imposed a tax upon the land of Judah of ten talents of gold, and an hundred talents of silver. Necho appointed Jehoiakim to succeed Jehoahaz on the throne; and this sovereign raised the tax by a capitation upon the people, proportioned to their respective incomes.

In the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar made an irruption into Judæa, and laid siege to Jerusalem, which was then under tribute to the king of Egypt; and having subdued the city, he appointed Jehoiakim to govern there as his tributary, though he had before confined him in irons, and formed the design of taking him a prisoner to Babylon. Thus is a reconciliation afforded to the different historical passages, where this event is mentioned; for some of these imply, that Jehoiakim was conducted to Babylon as a prisoner of war, and others that he continued to exercise the powers of the sovereignty.

Having reigned over Jerusalem for the space of three years, in subjection to Nebuchadnezzar, Jehoiakim fomented an insurrection against the conqueror; in consequence of which he entered Jerusalem a second time, and having slain his deputy, caused his body to be thrown into a common receptacle for soil.

Jerusalem was afterwards twice subdued by Nebuchadnezzar, and plundered of its wealth, together with the utensils dedicated to the service of the temple; and almost the whole of the inhabitants were transported to Babylon.

Upon the expiration of the seventy years of captivity, Cyrus published a decree for rebuilding the city of Jerusalem: but it was upwards of eighty years before the walls were completed. From this period till the time when Jerusalem came into the possession of the Romans, and till it was finally destroyed by Titus, it experienced a variety of revolutions; and the most remarkable of the sieges that the place sustained during this interval, were those conducted by Antiochus Sedetes and Herod: the first of whom took up arms to revenge himself for the affronts he had received from Simon Maccabæus, and the latter to obtain the sovereignty of the Jewish nation. In addition to the calamities the city sustained during these blockades, it was several times pillaged by foreign powers. But, notwithstanding these misfortunes, Jerusalem was considerably enlarged, and richly ornamented by the princes of the Asmonæan line, some of whom filled the throne with great splendour and dignity.

The last and most memorable of all the sieges of ancient Jerusalem, was that conducted by Titus, during the government of his father Vespasian. The most consummate skill in the art of war was displayed by the besiegers; and the defence was managed with a degree of courage and fortitude, equal to the intrepidity and perseverance of the assailants. Jerusalem was subdued and utterly destroyed by Titus in the year of the world four thousand and seventy, in the seventieth year after the birth of Christ, and in the sixty-sixth of the vulgar æra.

Having conquered the city, Titus commanded his soldiers to lay it in a state of desolation, excepting only the three spacious and magnificent towers of Phasaelis, Hippicus, and Mariamne, and that part of the wall which inclosed the city on the west side. The victor intended the towers should remain as monuments of the prowess of the Roman arms, and that the wall should serve as a rampart to the camp which he had appointed to guard the country.

It is asserted by Epiphanius, that the house to which the apostles retired after the ascension of our blessed Saviour, was preserved, as were the seven synagogues situated adjacent to this house, upon mount Sion. Eusebius says, that Titus preserved one half of the city, agreeably to the prediction of the prophet Zechariah: "Half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." According to St. Jerom, mount Moriah, where the temple was erected, and Sion, whereon stood the royal palace, received no injury from the army under Titus. The wall on the west side is supposed to have included half the city; and in this space were situated the towers of Phasaelis, Hippicus, and Mariamne. Admitting that only half the city was destroyed, nothing appears to derogate from the literal accomplishment of the prophecy of Christ; since Titus abolished the temple worship of the Jews, and, to all appearance, abrogated their civil authority; and since, what he left unfinished was completed by the emperor Adrian.

The inhabitants who remained in Judæa after the destruction of the temple, were severely taxed by Titus and Domitian. Nerva, the successor of Domitian, somewhat abated of this severity; but, rendered desperate by their calamities, they rebelled against Trajan, the next emperor, when, after an immense effusion of blood, they were reduced to a state of the most deplorable distress.

The Jews opposed the authority of Adrian; and their insurrections being fomented to a violent degree by the artifices of the impostor Barchochebas, who arrogated to himself the character of the Messiah, the emperor, to punish the contumacy of the Jews, and to prevent future dissensions, determined to effect the utter destruction of Jerusalem; and this purpose he, at length, executed, though not till five hundred and eighty thousand of the Jews lost their lives in the dreadful contest, wherein the slaughter on the part of the Romans was also very considerable.

Adrian intirely rebuilt Jerusalem, and gave it the name of *Ælia Capitolina. Great numbers of the Jews, all of whom were prohibited from entering this new city, under the penalty of being put to death, were publicly sold like cattle; and such as could not be disposed of in that manner, were transported into Egypt. A temple was built to Jupiter on the spot where Christ rose from the dead; a figure of Venus, carved in marble, was erected on Mount Calvary, where the cross stood; a hog in marble was fixed upon the gate leading to Bethlehem; at which place a grove was planted in honour of Adonis, to whom was dedicated the cave of the nativity of our blessed Saviour. From these facts it appears, that the vengeance of the emperor was directed both against the Jews and Christians, although the latter were not precluded from entering the city, and their bishops were indulged in the privilege of residing there, and exercising the functions of their office.

When the Christians were in a state of peace, they constructed a magnificent church on the spot where the temple had stood: but the holy city coming into the possession of the Turks, they built a mosque in the same place. The Christians, and particularly Helena, the mother of Constantine, raised many curious and superb edifices at Jerusalem, and the other places which are most remarkable in the gospel.

While perusing the history of our redemption, an additional pleasure must be afforded to the mind, if we are enabled to trace over the several revolutions which have occurred in the course of so many ages, and to take a view of the present state of those parts of the Holy Land which were once so highly honoured with the presence of the Son of God; and therefore it is presumed, that a concise description of the modern state of Jerusalem will not be unacceptable.

The church of the sepulchre is situated upon Mount Calvary, a small eminence upon the greater mount of Moriah. This place was anciently appropriated to the execution of

* The emperor called the place Ælia from his family name, and Capitolina in honour of Jupiter Capitolinus, to whom it was dedicated.

malefactors; and therefore it was not included in the walls of the city, being considered as a polluted and detestable spot. But after being made the altar on which was offered up the precious and all-sufficient sacrifice for the sins of mankind, the place was rescued from the reproach and infamy that had been so long annexed to it, and ever after held in the highest veneration; and, in process of time, buildings were made round the hill, which now stands in the middle of Jerusalem; a great part of Mount Sion being excluded, in order to make room for the admission of Mount Calvary within the walls of the city.

Previous to laying the foundation of the church upon Mount Calvary, it was found necessary to level the summit, by cutting away the rock in some places, and elevating the surface in others. In performing this work, however, particular care was taken that none of those parts of the hill, which were deemed to have been more immediately concerned in our blessed Saviour's passion, should suffer diminution, or any kind of alteration whatever. Thus the spot where it is recorded that Christ was lifted upon his cross, appears to have been left entire, being eighteen steps higher than the floor of the church; and the holy sepulchre, which was originally a cave hewn in the rock under ground, now appears as a cave above the general level of the rock.

Though this church is not one hundred paces in length, and not more than sixty in width, it is so contrived as to contain twelve or thirteen sanctuaries, or places consecrated to particular veneration, on account of their being reputed to have been the very places where many remarkable events took place, relating to the death and resurrection of our blessed Redeemer. Some of the places, thus held in pious veneration, are enumerated in the following manner: The spot where Christ was derided by the soldiers; where the soldiers divided his garments; where he was shut while his persecutors dug the hole to place the foot of the cross in, and made other preparations for the crucifixion; where he was nailed to the cross; where the cross was erected; where stood the soldiers who pierced the side of our blessed Saviour; where his body was anointed, preparatory to its interment; where his body was deposited in the sepulchre; where the angels appeared to the women, after the resurrection of Christ; where Christ appeared to Mary Magdalen. The places where these and many other occurrences happened, relating to our blessed Lord, are supposed to be contained within the narrow limits of this church; and they are said to be respectively distinguished by altars and other marks of veneration.

In the galleries surrounding the church, and also in the small buildings annexed to it, are a number of apartments for the reception of friars and pilgrims: and in these places, almost every Christian nation anciently maintained a small society of monks. Violent contentions formerly prevailed among the several fraternities of Christians residing here, as to the command and appropriation of the holy sepulchre. For appeasing these impious dissensions, about the year 1685, the king of France addressed a letter to the Grand Vizir, requesting that he would issue an order for giving possession of the holy sepulchre to the Latins, agreeably to the capitulation made in the year 1673. In consequence of this, and other applications of the French king, the holy sepulchre was appropriated to the Latins: but this was not accomplished till the year 1690. Though Christians of all nations are permitted to go into the holy sepulchre for their private devotions, the Latins only enjoy the privilege of publicly exercising the offices of religion.

There are constantly about ten or twelve of the Latins residing in the church, having a president, to whose directions they strictly conform. Every day they make a solemn procession, carrying tapers, crucifixes, and other religious implements, to the different sanctuaries, where they chant hymns applicable to each particular place.

At the distance of about a yard and a half from the place wherein the foot of the cross was fixed, is to be seen that memorable cleft in the rock, said to have been made by an earthquake which happened at the time of the crucifixion of our Saviour. The upper part of this cleft is about a span in width, and two in depth, when it appears to close, but it opens again below, as may be perceived from the chapel underneath. There is no other than traditional proof that this cavity was made at the time of our Saviour's passion; but that it is a natural breach, is beyond all possibility of doubt:

doubt; for it runs in intricate windings to an unknown depth in the earth, and, as far as can be perceived, the sides of this interstice exactly correspond with each other, and could not have been reached by any instrument whatever.

A little without Damascus gate is a spacious grot, said to have been, for some time, the residence of Jeremiah. On the left side of the grot is a shelf on the rock, which is said to have been the bed of the prophet. It is about eight feet from the floor, and at a small distance from it is the place where he is said to have written his Lamentations. This place is now a college of Dervises, and is held in high veneration by the Turks and Jews, as well as the Christians.

Near the above place are those celebrated grotts called the sepulchres of the kings; but whence they derived this name, cannot with certainty be determined. Neither the kings of Israel nor Judah were buried here; for the scriptures particularize other places, where they were interred. It may, however, be supposed, that Hezekiah was buried here, and that these were the sepulchres of the sons of David. "And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David," 2 Chron. xxxii. 33. This place is approached through an entrance hewn in the solid rock, which leads to an open court about forty feet square, cut down into the rock. On the south side of the court is a portico, nine paces long and four broad, also hewn out of the natural rock. Running along the front of this, is a kind of architrave, ornamented with sculptures representing fruits and flowers, which, though much defaced, are still plainly discernible. At the end of the portico, on the left hand, is the passage to the sepulchres, the entrance to which is exceedingly difficult, being encumbered with stones and rubbish: the first apartment is five or six yards square, being cut out of the natural rock; and the sides and cieling are made with such just angles, that a place more exactly square could not be formed by the utmost architectural nicety. Hence you pass into six other apartments, which lead from one to another; and these are of equal dimensions with the first: but the two innermost are deeper than the rest, having a descent to them of about six or seven steps.

In each of the above rooms, except the first, are several coffins of stone, placed in niches hollowed in the sides of the chambers. The lids of these coffins, which appear to have been ornamented with carved work, have been in a great measure destroyed by sacrilegious hands. The sides and cieling of the room continually emit moisture; and to carry off this, a channel is cut in the floor of each chamber.

The ceremony of the function of the holy fire is extravagant and absurd beyond description. It is still preserved by the Greeks and Armenians, under a pretence that, on every Easter-eve, a miraculous flame descends from heaven into the holy sepulchre, and kindles the lamps and candles there. On occasion of this ceremony, immense numbers of people assemble, and, after employing some hours in making a most hideous clamour through all the streets, and performing innumerable ridiculous and antic tricks, not to be surpassed by the most gross ideotism, or insanity inflamed by intoxication, they repair to the church of the holy sepulchre, round which they thrice proceed in tumultuous procession, carrying streamers, standards, and crucifixes.

Through some chinks in the door of the sepulchre a light appears, which is pretended to be the holy fire; and the tumult now becomes excessive, through the impatience of the multitude to light their candles at the holy flame, which they suppose to come immediately from heaven. Two priests now come out of the sepulchre, carrying blazing torches in their hands, and the people throng about them with inexpressible ardour, each endeavouring to obtain a part of the first and purest flame. Thus the whole church becomes illuminated almost in an instant, and the ceremony concludes.

After this, the people, who have lighted their candles at the holy fire, employ themselves in daubing pieces of linen with the wicks, and melting wax; and the linen thus daubed, is used for winding-sheets; it being the opinion of these ignorant and superstitious people, that a shroud thus prepared will effectually secure their eternal salvation.

Close by the church of the holy sepulchre is St. Peter's prison, from which he was delivered by the angel. "And behold the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined

shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals: and so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him," Acts xii. 7, 8, 9. The place where Peter was confined, was made use of as a prison a few years since, and probably is such at this time.

About a furlong from St. Peter's prison stands a church, said to have been built by Helena, on the spot where stood the house of Zebedee. This is in the possession of the Greeks, who say that Zebedee, being a fisherman, was accustomed to bring fish from Joppa to this place for sale. Near this spot is the place where people assert anciently stood the iron gate, which opened to Peter by a divine impulse. Here also is the small church built over the house of St. Mark, towards which the apostle repaired after his miraculous delivery from prison. In this church is shewn a Syriac manuscript of the New Testament, in folio, which the Syrians declare to be near nine hundred years old: and these people likewise shew a small stone font, which, they say, was used by the apostles in the ceremony of baptism. In the same street, and at about the distance of one hundred and fifty paces from the above church, is a house, said to be that inhabited by St. Thomas; this was formerly converted into a Christian church, but it is now a mosque.

A street crossing that where the above buildings stand, leads on the right to the spot where, it is said, our Saviour appeared to the martyrs, after his resurrection. On the left, the same street leads to the quarter where the Armenians have a spacious and delightful tract of ground, their convent and gardens occupying all that part of Mount Sion which is included within the walls of the city. Their church is built over the place where they assert St. James the brother of John was beheaded; and in a small chapel on the right hand of the church, they shew a place where, they say, the decollation was performed. In this church are two splendid altars, ornamented with rich mitres, embroidered copes, crosses of gold and silver, crowns, chalices, and a vast number of other church utensils. In the middle of the church is a beautiful pulpit made of tortoise-shell, and mother of pearl, having a rich canopy or cupola composed of the same materials. In a kind of ante-chapel in this church, are laid upon one side of the altar three large rough stones, which are held in high veneration, one of them being deemed the stone upon which Moses cast the two tables, when he broke them in indignation at the idolatry of the Jews; one of the others being brought from the place of our Saviour's baptism, and the third from that of his transfiguration.

A little farther is a small church, also in the hands of the Armenians, founded, as it is supposed, on the spot where stood the house of Annas. Within this building, and near the door, is shewn a hole in the wall, denoting the place where one of the officers of the high-priest smote our blessed Redeemer. The man by whose impious hand the blow was given, the friars insist to have been Malchus, whose ear our Saviour had healed. In the court before this church stood an olive tree, to which, it is reported, Christ was chained for some time by the command of Annas, in order to secure him from escape.

Near Sion gate, without the city, is a building called the house of Caiaphas. Here is another small chapel, also in the possession of the Armenians, under the altar of which, the people assert, is deposited the very stone which was laid to secure the door of the sepulchre of our Saviour. This stone is two yards and a quarter long, and one yard in breadth. After being many ages preserved in the church of the sepulchre, it was by a stratagem conveyed to this place by the Armenians. It is covered with a kind of plaister, except in five or six places, which were left bare, that it may receive the immediate devotions of pilgrims. Here is a small cell, which is shewn as the place where our Saviour was confined till the morning when he was conducted before Pilate; and here is also shewn the place where Peter was terrified into a denial of his master.

A little further, without the gate, is situated the church of Cœnaculum, where, it is asserted, Christ instituted his last supper. This place is now converted into a mosque, where Christians are not permitted to enter. Adjacent to this place is seen a well, which is said to denote the place where the apostles separated, in order that each man might go
upon

upon his particular charge. Close to this well are the ruins of a house, wherein the blessed Virgin is supposed to have expired.

A little way down the hill, towards the east, is the spot where a Jew arrested the corpse of the mother of God, as her sacred remains were carrying for interment; for which act of impiety he was punished, by the hand with which he had seized the bier instantly becoming useless. About the same space, further down the hill, is shewn a grate wherein St. Peter is said to have deplored his inconstancy to Christ. Going out at Bethlehem gate, and turning on the left hand, and passing the castle of Pisans, we come to the place called Bathsheba's pool, which is situated at the bottom of Mount Sion, and supposed by some to be the same wherein Bathsheba was bathing when David descried her from the terrace of his palace: but others imagine that this circumstance happened while she was refreshing herself in a smaller pool, just within Bethlehem gate.

A little below commences the valley of Hinnom, on the west side of which is the place anciently called the Potter's Field, and afterwards the Field of Blood, in consequence of its being purchased with the pieces of silver which were the price of the blood of the blessed Jesus: but it is now called the Campo Sancto, or Holy Field, on account of the great veneration in which it is held by the Christians. It is a piece of ground about thirty yards long, and about half that measure in breadth. One half of this field is occupied by a square fabric twelve yards high, which was built for, and is used as, a charnel-house.

A little below the Campo Sancto is an intricate cave or sepulchre, consisting of several apartments, one within another, wherein it is said the apostles concealed themselves, when they deserted Jesus. A little beyond this cave, the valley of Hinnom terminates; and then commences that of Jehoshaphat, which runs across the mouth of Hinnom. At the bottom of the valley of Hinnom runs the brook Cedron, which is often dried up in the summer months. In the valley of Jehoshaphat is the well of Nehemiah, so called in consequence of its being supposed to be the place from which that restorer of Israel recovered the fire of the altar, after the Babylonish captivity.

At some distance above the well of Nehemiah, on the left hand side, is the fountain of the blessed Virgin, so called, because, as it is reported, she was accustomed to resort thither for water, but at what times, or upon what occasions, is not known. Opposite this fountain is a village called Siloe, wherein Solomon is said to have kept his strange wives; and above this village is a hill called the Mountain of Offence, because there Solomon built the high places, in consequence of his wives having perverted him to idolatry in the decline of his life.

On the same side, and not far distant from Siloe, is shewn another Aceldema, or Field of Blood, so named, because it was upon this spot that Judas was put to death by the judgment of the Almighty. A little farther, on the same side of the valley, are several Jewish monuments, among which are two noble antiquities, called the sepulchre of Zechariah, and the pillar of Absalom; and close to the latter is the sepulchre of Jehoshaphat, from which the name of the whole valley is derived.

In the bottom of the valley towards the north, is a broad stone of a remarkable hard quality, whereon are several impressions, which the friars say are the prints made by the feet of our blessed Saviour, when he was hurried to the tribunal of his cruel persecutors: and a few paces from this stone is a place called the sepulchre of the blessed Virgin, to which there is a descent of forty-seven steps: as you descend, on the right hand you perceive the sepulchre of St. Anna, and, on the left, that of St. Joseph, the mother and husband of the Virgin Mary, the mother of our blessed Saviour.

About two-thirds of the way up Mount Olivet, are several grotts or caves, which are called the sepulchres of the prophets: and a little above are twelve arched vaults, built in commemoration of the twelve apostles, who are said to have compiled their creed in this place. Sixty paces higher is the place where Christ is said to have pronounced his prophecy concerning the final destruction of Jerusalem: and a little to the right of this is the spot where, they say, he a second time dictated the Pater Noster to his disciples. Further up the hill is the cave of Pelagia, and above that a pillar, denoting the spot

where an angel gave the blessed Virgin notice of her death, three days before that event occurred.

At the top of the hill is the place of our Saviour's ascension. Anciently a church stood here, in honour of our Lord's glorious triumph; but all that remains is an octogonal cupola, measuring about eight yards in diameter, standing, as is reported, immediately over where the footsteps of the Son of God last impressed the earth. Within the cupola is a large stone, which is said to bear the impression of one of our Saviour's feet. Here was formerly a stone with a similar impression: but some years ago this was removed by the Turks into the great mosque upon Mount Moriah. This chapel of the ascension is in possession of the Turks, who apply it to the purposes of a mosque. The Turks have also the possession of many other holy places about Jerusalem, for which they pretend to have a veneration equal to that of the Christians: but this is only the pretence of zeal, adopted to extort money from those pious Christians who resort to these holy places from principles of apparent devotion.

The summit of Mount Olivet is about two furlongs northward of the place last mentioned. Here stood an ancient tower, erected in commemoration of the appearance of the two angels to the apostles, after the ascension of our Saviour. This monument remained till within the last century, when it was destroyed by a Turk, who had purchased the field whereon it stood.

Descending by another road, about the midway, is the place where Christ beheld and wept over the city: and near the bottom of the hill is a large stone, upon which it is said that the blessed Virgin let fall her girdle, after her assumption. There is a serpentine impression upon the stone, which the people insist to have been made by the girdle. Near this spot is a ledge of naked rocks, reported to be the place where the apostles Peter, James, and John, fell asleep during the agony of Christ; and a few paces from hence is a grotto, where Christ is reputed to have endured that part of his passion. About eight paces from where the apostles slept, is a piece of ground twelve yards long, and one broad, which is supposed to be the very path wherein the traitor Judas walked up to Jesus, saying, "Hail, Master! and kissed him."

An ordinary Turkish house is built upon the place, where it is said, formerly stood the palace of Pilate. This building is near the gate of St. Stephen, and borders upon the area of the temple, on the north side. The terrace of this house commands a prospect of the whole ground whereon the temple stood. In the area of this once magnificent structure, innumerable marks of immense labour are still plainly discernible. In the middle stands a mosque, supposed to be built upon the very spot where stood the Sanctum Sanctorum. In this pretended house of Pilate is shewn a room, where the people assert Christ was mocked with the ensigns of royalty, and buffeted by the soldiers. On the opposite side of the street, where anciently stood a stately palace, is shewn a room, where it is said our Lord was scourged. This place was once converted into a stable by a bassa of Jerusalem; but it is reported that soon after this profanation, a mortality ensued among the horses, in consequence of which the place was rescued from this fordid use.

The pool of Bethesda is one hundred and twenty paces long, forty broad, and at least eight in depth; but it has no other water than that supplied by rain. At the west end are the remains of three arches, which the people insist to have been the places where afflicted persons sought shelter, while waiting to obtain relief by going into the water, after its being miraculously put in commotion on a certain day of each year. But this place does not correspond with the description given by the evangelist, who says there were five porches. "Now there is at Jerusalem, by the sheep-market, a pool which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches: in these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then, first after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." John v. 2, &c.

The church of St. Anne is a large building, but intirely neglected. In a grotto beneath the church is shewn a place where the blessed Virgin is said to have been born. Near this

church is shewn the house of the Pharisee, where Mary Magdalen exhibited evidences of a sincere repentance, and a devout affection towards our Saviour.

About two furlongs westward of Bethlehem gate is Mount Gihon, where there is a pool plentifully stored with water, being one hundred and six paces long, and sixty-seven broad.

Having particularly described Jerusalem and its adjacencies, we shall now insert a computation of the circumference of the city, which, though measured by paces, is supposed very nearly to describe the true circuit of the walls.

	Paces.
From Bethlehem gate to the corner on the right hand.....	400
From that corner to Damascus gate.....	680
From Damascus gate to Herod's.....	380
From Herod's gate to Jeremiah's prison.....	150
From Jeremiah's prison to the corner next the valley of Jehoshaphat.....	225
From that corner to St. Stephen's gate.....	385
From St. Stephen's gate to the golden gate.....	240
From the golden gate to the corner of the wall.....	380
From that corner to the dung gate.....	470
From the dung gate to Sion gate.....	605
From Sion gate to the corner of the wall.....	215
From that corner to Bethlehem gate.....	500

Total, 4630

These paces being reduced to English measure, make four thousand one hundred and sixty-seven yards, which are just equal to two miles and a half.

The small city of Cana, belonging to the tribe of Zebulun, was situated between Sephoris and Nazareth, being about six miles westward of the former. To distinguish it from other places of the same name, it was called Cana of Galilee. This city was rendered remarkable, by being the place where the miracles of our Saviour commenced. It contained no buildings of sufficient consequence to be here described: but though of small extent, it was a populous town, and among the inhabitants were a great number of persons of exemplary piety, which, in all probability, induced our Lord to make this the frequent place of his residence, and to perform herein so great a number of miracles, in manifestation of the divinity of his mission. It is supposed that in this city resided Alphæus, otherwise named Cleophas, whose wife was Mary, either the sister or cousin german of the blessed Virgin; and at her habitation it is imagined the marriage feast was celebrated, at which our Saviour worked the miracle of changing water into wine.

But very little information can be collected respecting the town of Capernaum. It is not once mentioned in the Old Testament, either under this or any other name; and therefore it may be concluded that it did not exist when that sacred work was written, and consequently that it was one of the towns built by the Jews, after their return from the Babylonish captivity, upon the coast of the sea of Galilee. The city derived its name from the adjacent spring of Capernaum, which was celebrated for its chrystalline waters. This was the place where our Saviour usually resided during the three years and a half of his public ministry, on which account our Lord himself declared it to be "exalted unto heaven." The severe sentence pronounced by our Saviour against Capernaum, when he said it should be "brought down to hell," was fully verified; for many years since it was so reduced from the state it enjoyed in the times of the New Testament, that all the habitations it contained were six miserable cottages, belonging to some fishermen.

The extensive level plain adjacent to the Dead Sea, though, on account of the saline quality of the soil, unfit for the maintenance of cattle, and the cultivation of corn, olives, and vines, was admirably adapted to the nourishment of bees. Speaking of this country, Josephus says, "*It abounds in thick groves, and a variety of gardens; and there

* Vide Bradshaw's Josephus.

are, on the banks of its rivulets, a number of palm trees, different from each other in name, flavour, and quality. From some of these, the inhabitants extract large quantities of honey, not much inferior to the other honey of the country, of which they have great abundance†. They have likewise a great plenty of balsam, which is deemed the most choice of their productions; nor is cyprus and myrobalanus in less abundance. A country which produces the most rare fruits of the earth, and those the largest and best of their kinds, may be deemed signalized by heaven with its peculiar favours. This country likewise is equally famous with the most prolific of others, for the production, cultivation, and variety, of other fruits. I imagine that this circumstance may be, in a great degree, owing to the particular salubrity of the air, and the singular nature of the water: the former being fitly adapted to the disclosing of leaves, flowers, and such other vegetables as are under its influence; and the latter by increasing the sap, to bind and fortify the roots so as to be proof against the raging heats of the sun, which are so powerful in this country, as almost to repel vegetation, if without such assistance. But notwithstanding the violence of these heats, there are such refreshing breezes every morning, that the water is perfectly agreeable before the rising of the sun. In winter it is extremely agreeable to bathe in this water, which is then warm. In fact, such is the happy temperature of this climate, that when frost and snow prevail in other parts of Judæa, the natives of this place dress only in flight linen. It is situated sixty stadia from the river Jordan, and one hundred and fifty from Jerusalem; and the whole country is a mere rock and desert between that and Jerusalem." To return:

After Jesus had finished his discourses to his disciples and the people, he commanded Peter, James, and John, to follow him to the summit of an exceeding high mountain, that their devotions might not be interrupted by the multitude.

While his apostles slept, Jesus addressed himself in fervent prayer to his heavenly Father; and his countenance underwent a sudden and surprising alteration, being suffused with a heavenly brilliancy more glorious than the meridian sun; and the colour of his garments at the same time changed to a degree of whiteness, pure and refulgent as the very light. Moses, the great lawgiver of Israel, and Elias, the zealous defender of the laws of God, now descended from heaven in all the glories of immortality, and conversed with Jesus, on the subject of the indignities, sufferings, and death, that he was to sustain at Jerusalem.

Though we have, in a former part of this work, briefly treated on this subject of our Lord's transfiguration on the mount (see p. 156, &c.), nevertheless we presume that its great importance, and the instruction that may be derived from a further consideration of it, will render necessary the following

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS on CHRIST'S TRANSFIGURATION.

It falls out with this discourse as with Mount Tabor itself; that it is more easily climbed with the eye, than with the foot: if we may not rather say of it, as Josephus did of Sinai, that it doth not only *ascensus hominum*, but *aspectus fatigare*, that is, weary not only the steps, but the very sight of men. Our traveller observes, "We had thought not to spend many breaths in the skirts of the hill, the circumstances; and it hath cost us one hour's journey already; and we were glad to rest, before we can have left them below us; one pause more (I hope) will overcome them; and set us on the top." No circumstance remains undiscussed, but this one: What Moses and Elias did with Christ in their apparition? For they were not, as some sleepy attendants (like the three disciples in the beginning), to be there and see nothing; nor, to be some silent spectators, mute witnesses, to see and say nothing: but (as if their glory had not in the least changed their profession)

† The constitution of their bodies, and the nature of their climate, inclined the people to an abstemious manner of living; vegetables, milk, and honey, being the principal means of their support.

they are prophets still; and foretold our Lord's departure, as St. Luke tells us: foretold, not to him who knew it before, yea who told it them, as they could not have known it, but from him; for he was the Word of his Father; they only told that which he before had revealed to his disciples; and now these heavenly witnesses tell it over again for confirmation: even as John the Baptist knew Christ before; he was *Vox clamantis*, the voice of a cryer; the other *Verbum Patris*, word of his Father. There is great affinity betwixt *vox* and *verbum*; yea, this voice had uttered itself clearly: *Ecce Agnus Dei*, Behold the Lamb of God: nevertheless he sends his disciples with an "Art thou he?" that he might confirm to them, by him, that which he both knew and had said of him: so our Saviour follows his forerunner in this; that what he knew, and had told his disciples; the other Elias, the typical John Baptist, and Moses, must make good to their belief.

This departure of Christ was a word both hard and harsh; hard to believe, and harsh in believing. The disciples thought of nothing but a kingdom: a kingdom restored magnificently, and having no bounds; and two of these three witnesses had so swallowed this hope, that they had put in for places in the state, to be his chief peers: how could they think of a parting? The throne of David so filled their eyes, that they could not see his cross: and if they must swallow this pill, how bitter must it needs be! His presence was their joy and life; it was their death to think of losing him: now therefore, that they might see that his sufferings and death were not the result of any sudden impotence, but predetermined in heaven, and revealed to the saints; two of the most noted saints in heaven are appointed to second the news of his departure; and that, in the midst of his transfiguration: so that they could not choose but think, he that can be thus happy, need not be miserable; and that passion which he will undergo, is not out of weakness, but out of love. It is wittily noted by that sweet writer Chrysostom, that Christ never lightly spake of his passion, but that immediately before, as well as after, he performed some great miracle. And here, answerably thereto, in the midst of his miraculous transfiguration, the two saints speak of his passion: a strange opportunity! in his highest exaltation, to speak of his sufferings; to talk of Calvary in Tabor; when his head shone with glory, to tell him it must bleed with thorns; when his face shone like the sun, to tell him it must be blubbered and spit upon; when his garments glistened with that celestial brightness, to tell him they must be stripped and divided; when he was adored by the saints of heaven, to tell him how he must be scorned by the basest of men; when he was seen between two saints, to tell him how he must be seen suffering death between two malefactors; in a word, in the midst of his divine majesty, to tell him of his shame; and while he was transfigured in the mount, to tell him how he must be disfigured upon the cross! yet, these two heavenly prophets found this the fittest time for this discourse: rather choosing to speak of his sufferings in the height of his glory, than of his glory after his sufferings. It is most seasonable, in our best, to think of our worst estate: for, both that thought will be best digested, when we are well; and that change will be best prepared for, when we are the furthest from it. You would perhaps think it unseasonable for me, in the midst of all your court jollity, to tell you of the days of mourning, and with that great king to serve in a death's head amongst your royal dishes; to shew your coffins in the midst of your triumphs: yet these precedents above exhibited shew me that no time is so fit as this.

We are now ascended to the top of the hill; let us therefore stand and see, and wonder at this great sight, as Moses to see the bush flaming and not consumed; so we to see the humanity continuing itself, in the midst of these beams of glory. This is one of the rarest occurrences that ever befel the Saviour of the world: I am used to reckon up these four principal wonders of his life: incarnation, temptation, transfiguration, and agony: the first in the womb of the Virgin, the second in the wilderness, the third in the mount, the fourth in the garden: the first, that God should become man; the second, that God and man should be tempted, and transported by Satan; the third, that man should be glorified upon earth; the last, that he who was man and God should sweat blood under the sense of God's wrath for man. And all these either had the angels for witnesses, or the immediate voice of God. The first had angels singing; the second, angels ministering; the third, the voice of God thundering; the fourth, the angels comforting; so that

it may be no wonder the earth marvels at those things whereat the angels stand amazed. Bernard makes three kinds of wonderful changes; height to lowliness, when the Word took flesh; contempt to majesty, when Christ transformed himself before his disciples; change to eternity, when he rose again, and ascended to heaven to reign for ever: ye see this is one of them; and as Tabor rose out of the valley of Galilee, so this exaltation rose out of the midst of Christ's humiliation; other wonders increase his dejection, this only makes for his glory; and the glory of this may be matched with the humiliation of all the rest. That face wherein before, saith Isaiah, there was no form nor beauty, now shines as the sun; that face, from which men hid their faces in contempt, now shines so that mortal eyes were constrained to hide themselves from the lustre of it; while immortal receive their beams from it. Christ had ever, as Jerom speaks, a certain heavenly majesty in his countenance which made his disciples follow him at first sight; but here, on this occasion, was the perfection of supercelestial brightness. It was a miracle towards the three children, that they were so delivered from the flames, that their very garments smelt not of the fire: it is no less miracle in Christ, that his very garments were dyed celestial, and favoured of his glory: As Aaron was so anointed on his head and beard, that his skirts were all perfumed: his clothes therefore shone as snow, yea (that were but a waterish white), rather as the light itself, saith St. Mark and St. Matthew, in most Greek copies; that seamless coat, as it had no welt, so it had no spot. The King's Son is all fair, even without. O excellent glory of his humanity! the best diamond or carbuncle is hid with a case: but this brightness pierces through all his garments, and makes them diffuse light in him, which used to conceal light in others. Herod put him on in mockery, not a white, but a bright robe (the ignorance whereof makes a shew of disparity in the evangelists), but God the Father, to glorify him, clothes his very garments with heavenly splendor: "Behold, thou art fair, my beloved: behold, thou art fair, and there is no spot in thee." Thine head is as fine gold, thy mouth is as sweet things, and thou art wholly delightful: "Come forth, ye daughters of Sion, and behold king Solomon, with the crown wherewith his father crowned him, in the day of the gladness of his heart." O Saviour, if thou wert such in Tabor, what art thou in heaven! If this were the glory of thy humanity, what is the presence of thy godhead! Let no man, however, wrong himself so much, as to magnify this happiness as another's; and to put himself out of the participation of this glory: Christ is our head, we are his members; as we all were in the first Adam, both innocent and sinning; so are we, in the second Adam, both shining in Tabor, and sweating blood in the garden: and as we are already happy in him, so shall we be once, in ourselves, by and through him. He shall "change our vile bodies, that they may be like his glorious body!" Behold our pattern, and rejoice; "like his glorious body." These very bodies, that are now as clods, like the earth, shall once be bright as the sun; and we, that now see clay in one another's faces, shall then see nothing but heaven in our countenances; we also, that now set forth our bodies with clothes, shall then be clothed upon with immortality, out of the wardrobe of heaven.

Now, from the glory of the Master, give me leave to turn your eyes to the error of the servant: who, having slept with the rest, and now suddenly awaking, knows not whether he slept at all. To see such a light about him, three such glittering persons before him, made him doubt now, as he did afterwards, when he was carried by the angel through the iron gate, whether it were a pleasing dream, or a real act. All slept, and now all waked, only Peter slept waking, and I know not whether he more erred in his speech or in his sleep. It was a shame for a man to sleep in Tabor, but it is a greater shame for a man to dream with his eyes open: thus did Peter, "Master, it is good for us to be here."

Yet if any earthly place or condition might have given warrant to Peter's motion, this was it: here was a hill, the emblem of heaven; here were saints, the epitome of heaven; here was Christ, the God of heaven: and if Peter might not say so of this, how shall we say of any other place, *Bonum est esse hic?* "It is good to be here." Will ye say of the country, *Bonum est esse hic?* there is melancholy, dullness, privacy, toil: will you say of the

court, *Bonum est esse hic?* there dwells ambition, secret undermining, attendance, humour-serving and time-serving. Will ye say of the city, *Bonum est esse hic?* there you find continual tumult, usury, cheating in bargains, excess and disorder. Get you to the wilderness, and say, "It is good to be here;" even there evils will find us out: for, saith Bernard, In the wood dwells the wolf: in short, weariness and sorrow dwell every-where. The rich man wallows among his heaps; and when he is in his counting-house, beset with piles of bags, he can say, *Bonum est esse hic*: he worships these molten images; his gold is his god, his heaven is his chest: not thinking of that which Tertullian notes, That some countries make their very fetters of gold: yea so doth he, while he admires it, making himself the slave to his servant. If God's hand touch him ever so little, can his gold bribe a disease? can his bags keep his head from aching? or the gout from his joints? or doth his loathing stomach make a difference between an earthen and a silver dish? O vain desires, and impotent satisfactions of men, which not only cannot save them from evils, but, on the contrary, help to make them miserable! Behold, their wealth feeds them with famine; refreshes them with toil; cheers them with cares, blesses them with torments; and yet they say, "It is good to be here:" How are their sleeps broken with cares! how are their hearts broken with losses! Either riches have wings, which, in the clipping or pulling, flee away, and take them to heaven: or else their souls have wings (Thou fool, this night, &c.), and fly from their riches to hell.

King Henry the Seventh's emblem in the windows of all his buildings, was a crown in a bush of thorns; I know not with what historical allusion; but I think it implies that high stations are not free from great cares. Saul knew what he did when he hid himself among the stuff; and no man knoweth the weight of a scepter, but he that swayeth it. As for subordinate greatness, it hath so much less worth, as it hath more dependence: how many sleepless nights, restless days, and busy shifts doth their ambition cost them, who affect eminence! Certainly no men are so worthy of pity as they whose height thinks all others worthy of contempt. High places are slippery; and as it is easy to fall, so the ruin is deep, and the recovery difficult. *Altio rem locum sortitus es, non tutiorem; sublimiorem, sed non securiorem*, saith Bernard; "Thou hast got an higher place, but not a safer; a loftier, but not one more secure."

Tell me, ye that have the greatest command on earth, whether this vile world hath ever afforded you any sincere contentment? The world is your servant; if it were your most faithful friend, yet could it make you heartily merry? Ye delicatest courtiers, tell me if pleasure itself hath not an unpleasant irksomeness hanging upon it, and more sting than honey? And whereas all happiness (even here below) is in the vision of God, how is our spiritual eye hindered, as the body is from the object, by darkness, by false light, by aversion!—Darkness; he that doth sin is in darkness:—false light; whilst we measure eternal things by temporary:—aversion, while, as weak eyes hate the light, we turn our eyes from the true and immutable good, to the fickle and uncertain. We are not on the hill, but in the valley, where we have tabernacles, not of our own making, but of clay; and in which we are witnesses of Christ, not transfigured in glory, but blemished with dishonour; dishonoured with oaths and blasphemies; re-crucified with our sins; we are witnesses of God's saints, not shining in Tabor, but mourning in darkness; and, instead of that heavenly brightness, cloathed with sackcloth and ashes. Then and there we shall have tabernacles not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where we shall taste how sweet the Lord is; we shall see the triumphs of Christ; we shall hear and sing the hallelujahs of saints.

Had the disciples too long gazed upon this resplendent spectacle, as their eyes had been blinded, so their hearts had perhaps grown to an over-bold familiarity with that heavenly object. How seasonably therefore doth the cloud intercept it! The wise God knows our need of these vicissitudes and alloys. If we have a light, we must have a cloud; if a light to cheer us, we must have a cloud to humble us: it was so in Sinai, it was so in Sion, it was so in Olivet; it will never be otherwise. The natural day and night do no more duly interchange, than this light and cloud. Above, we shall have the light without the cloud;

cloud; a clear vision and fruition of God, without any dim and sad interpositions; below, we cannot be free from these mists and clouds of sorrow and misapprehension.

But this was a bright cloud; there is difference betwixt the cloud in Tabor and that in Sinai: this was clear, that darksome; there is darkness in the law, there is light in the grace of the gospel: Moses was there spoken to in darkness; here he was spoken with in light. In that dark cloud there was terror; in this there was comfort: though it were a cloud then, yet it was bright; and though it were bright, yet it was a cloud: with much light, there was some shade: God would not speak to them concerning Christ, out of darkness; neither would he yet manifest himself to them in an absolute brightness: all his appearances have this mixture. What need I produce any other instance than in these two fairs? Moses spake often to God mouth to mouth; yet not so immediately, but that there was always somewhat drawn, as a curtain, betwixt God and him; either fire in Horeb, or smoke in Sinai; so as his face was not more veiled from the people than God's from him: Elias shall be spoken to by God, but in the rock, and under a mantle; and in vain shall we hope for any revelation from God, but in a cloud. Worldly hearts are in utter darkness; they see not so much as the least glimpse of these divine beams, not a beam of that inaccessible light: the best of his fairs see him here, but in a cloud, or in a glass. Happy are we, if God hath honoured us with these divine representations of himself! Once, in his light, we shall see light.

I can easily think with what amazement these three disciples stood compassed in that bright cloud, expecting some miraculous event, of so heavenly a vision; when suddenly they might hear a voice sounding out of that cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear him." They need not be told whose that voice was; the place, the matter evinced it; no angel in heaven could or durst have said so: how gladly doth Peter afterwards recount it! "For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son," &c.

The ear only was here taught, not the eye; as of Horeb, so of Sinai, so of Tabor, might God say, "Ye saw no shape, nor image, in that day that the Lord spake unto you." He that knows our proneness to idolatry, avoids those occasions which we might take to abuse our own fancies.

Twice hath God spoken these words to his own Son from heaven; once in his baptism, and now again in his transfiguration: here, not without some apposite comparison; not Moses, not Elias, but this: Moses and Elias were servants, this a Son; Moses and Elias were sons, but of grace and choice; this is that Son, the Son by nature; other sons are beloved as of favour, and free election; this is "The beloved," as in the unity of his essence: others are so beloved, that he is pleased with themselves; this so beloved, that in and for him he is pleased with mankind. As the relation betwixt the Father and the Son is infinite, so is the love: we measure the intenseness of love by the extension; the love that rests in the person affected alone, is but small; true love descends (like Aaron's ointment) from the head to the skirts; to children, friends, allies. O incomprehensibly large love of God the Father to the Son, that for his sake he is pleased with the world! O perfect and happy complacency! Out of Christ there is nothing but enmity betwixt God and the soul; in him, there can be nothing but peace. When the beams are met in one center, they not only heat but burn. Our weak love is diffused to many; God hath some, the world more; and therein, wives, children, friends: but this infinite love of God hath all the beams of it united in one only object, the Son of his love; neither doth he love any thing but in the participation of his love, in the derivation from it. O God, let me be found in Christ, and how canst thou but be pleased with me?

This one voice proclaims Christ at once the Son of God, the reconciler of the world, the teacher and lawgiver of his church. As the Son of God, he is essentially interested in his love; as he is the reconciler of the world in whom God is well pleased, he most justly challenges our love and adherence: as he is the instructor and lawgiver, he justly challenges our audience, our obedience. Even so, Lord, teach us to hear and obey thee, as
our

our teacher; to love thee and believe in thee as our reconciler; and, as the eternal Son of thy Father, to adore thee!

The light caused wonder in the disciples; but the voice, astonishment; they are all fallen down upon their faces: who can blame a mortal man to be thus affected with the voice of his Maker? yet this word was but plausible and hortatory; O God, how shall flesh and blood be other than swallowed up with the horror of thy dreadful sentence of death! The lion shall roar, who shall not be afraid? how will they who have slighted the sweet voice of thine invitations call to the rocks to hide them from the terror of thy judgments!

The God of mercies pities our infirmities. I do not hear our Saviour say, Ye lay sleeping one while upon the earth, now ye lie astonished: ye could neither wake to see, nor stand to hear, now lie still and tremble. But he graciously touches and comforts them, "Arise, fear not." That voice which will raise them up out of the earth, might well raise them up from it; that hand which by the least touch restored sight, limbs, life, might well restore the spirits of the dismayed: O Saviour, let that sovereign hand of thine touch us, when we lie in the trances of our griefs, in the bed of our securities, in the grave of our sins, and we shall arise.

"They looking up saw no man save Jesus alone;" and that doubtless in his wonted form; all was now gone, Moses, Elias, the cloud, the voice, the glory; Tabor itself cannot be long blessed with that divine light; and those shining guests; heaven will not allow to earth any long continuance of glory; only above is constant happiness to be looked for, and enjoyed, where we shall ever see our Saviour in his unchangeable brightness; where the light shall never be clouded or varied.

Moses and Elias are gone, only Christ is left. The glory of the law, and the prophets was but temporary, yea momentary, that only Christ may remain to us intire, and conspicuous: they came but to give testimony to Christ; when that is done, they are vanished.

Designing now to go up to Jerusalem to suffer (which he had had his thoughts much upon before, as a time drawing near, as appears from Luke ix. 51.) he went thitherward, passing between Galilee and Samaria: and in a certain village, as he passed along, there met him ten lepers, who cried to him for help. He intimates to them, they shall be healed, bidding them go and shew themselves to the priests (which by the law they were required to do when the cure was wrought), that he may pronounce them clean, and offer the sacrifices prescribed for them, as is enjoined, Lev. xiv. And accordingly it fell out, as they were on their way, they were all healed.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS on the TEN LEPERS.

Ten lepers are here met: they who are excluded from all other society, seek the company of each other; fellowship we all naturally affect, though even in leprosy. Lepers will always flock to their fellows: and where shall we find one spiritual leper alone? Drunkards, profane persons, heretics, will be sure to associate with their matches. And why should not God's saints delight in an holy communion? Why is it not our chief joy to assemble on occasions for good?

Jews and Samaritans could not abide one another, yet here in leprosy they agree; here was one Samaritan leper with the Jewish; community of suffering hath made them friends, whom even religion disjoined: what virtue there is in misery, that can unite even the most estranged hearts!

These ten are met together, and all meet Christ; not casually but upon mature deliberation; they purposely waited for this opportunity. No wonder if they thought no attendance long to be delivered from so loathsome and miserable a disease! Great Naaman could be glad to come from Syria to Judæa, in hope of leaving that hateful guest behind him. We are all sensible enough of our bodily infirmities; Oh that we could be equally weary of the sicknesses and deformities of our better part! Surely our spiritual maladies are no

less than mortal; if they be not healed, the disease remains: these men had died lepers if they had not met with Christ, the great physician. Dear Saviour, give us grace to seek thee, and patience to wait for thee, and then we know thou wilt find us, and we shall obtain a remedy.

Where do these lepers attend for Christ, but in a village? and that, not in the street of it: but in the entrance, in the passage to it: the cities, the towns were not for them. The law of God had shut them out from all frequented places, from all conversation; care for safety and fear of infection was motive enough to make their neighbours observant of this piece of the law. It is not the body only that is herein respected, by the God of spirits; they who are spiritually contagious must be still and ever avoided: they must be separated from us, we must be separated from them; they from us by just censures; or (if that be neglected) we from them by a voluntary shunning of their familiar conversation. Besides the benefit of our safety, wickedness would soon be ashamed of itself, if it were not for the encouragement of companions; solitariness is the fittest antidote for spiritual infection; it were happy for the wicked man, if he could be separated from himself.

It hath ever been God's method by small precepts to prove men's dispositions. Obedience is as well tried in a trifle, as in the most important charge; yea so much more, as the thing required is less; for, oftentimes they who would be careful in great affairs, think they may neglect the smallest. What command soever we receive from God, or our superiors, we must not consider the weight of the thing, but the authority of the commander; either difficulty, or slightness, are vain pretences for disobedience.

These lepers are wiser; they obeyed, and went; what was the issue? As they went, they were healed; lo, had they stood still, they had continued lepers; now they went, they are whole. What haste the blessing makes to overtake their obedience!

Now methinks I see what mixture of joy and amazement there was amongst these lepers, when they saw themselves thus suddenly cured; each tells the other what a change he feels in himself; each comforts the other with assurance of his outward remedy, each congratulates the other's happiness; and thinks and says how joyful this news will be to their friends and families; their society now helps them well to applaud and heighten their new felicity.

The miracle indifferently wrought upon all, is differently taken: all went forward (according to the appointment) toward the priests; all were obedient, one only was thankful: all were cured; all saw themselves cured; their sense was alike, their hearts were not so. What could make the difference but grace? and who could make the difference of grace, but he that gave it? He that wrought the cure in all, wrought the grace not in all, but in one. The same act, the same motives, are not equally powerful to all; where the ox finds grass, the viper poison. We all pray, all hear, one goes away benefited, another cavils: will makes the difference; but who makes the difference of wills, but he that made them? He that creates the new heart; leaves a stone in one bosom, and puts flesh into another; "It is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that hath mercy." O God, if we look not up to thee, we may come and not be healed; we may be healed, and not be thankful.

This one man breaks away from his companions, to seek Christ. While he was a leper, he conformed with lepers; now that he is healed, he will be free: he saith not, I came with these men, with them I will go; if they will return, I will accompany them; if not, why should I go alone? as I am not wiser than they, so I have no reason to be more thankful. There are cases, wherein singularity is not lawful only, but laudable; "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; I and my house will serve the Lord." It is a base and unworthy thing for a man so to subject himself to others' examples, as not sometimes to resolve to be an example to others; when either evil is to be done, or good neglected, how much better is it to go the right way alone, than to err with company!

Oh noble pattern of thankfulness, what speed of retribution is here! no sooner doth he see his cure, than he hastens to acknowledge it; the benefit shall not die, not sleep in his hand: late professions of our obligations favour of dullness and ingratitude. What a la-

borious and diligent officiousness is here! he stands not still, but puts himself to the pains of a return. What a hearty recognition of the blessing! his voice was not more loud in his suit, than in his thanks. What an humble reverence of his benefactor! he falls down at his feet; as acknowledging at once beneficence and unworthiness. Happy for all Israel, if they could but learn of this Samaritan.

Jesus being now asked of the Pharisees (who expected the Messiah should be a temporal prince, and should deliver them from the Roman yoke under which they groaned), "when the kingdom of God," of which he had so often spoken, "would come;" or when he would, if he were the Messiah, take upon him regal authority? He answers, that the kingdom of God, or of the Messiah, comes not with observation, or outward pomp and splendor, as they expected, but was brought to them by the ministry of John, of himself, and of his disciples; that he, the true Messiah, was now among them, and his kingdom was set up by the secret operation of the Spirit of God in the souls of men, through the preaching of the Gospel, which was the scepter of his kingdom, which is spiritual, and not obvious to men's eyes, or observation; so that they shall say, "Lo here, or, lo there" is the seat of his empire; for it is not confined to any one place, Luke xvii. ver. 20, 21.

2. Having spoken these things to the Pharisees, he turns to the disciples, and acquaints them what days of tribulation should come on that nation, after his departure out of the world, and then they should wish for his bodily presence again among them, for their defence and comfort, though now they did not prize it as they ought; he moreover warns them, that they should not, by such a desire, be induced to believe those seducers* who would at that time arise, putting them in hope of a deliverer, pretending there is a Messiah in this or that place. These he charges them they should not go after nor follow; ver. 23.

3. He shews them that his coming to execute vengeance on his enemies (viz. these obdurate Jews by the Romans) would be sudden, like lightning in the air. But he must first be rejected and crucified by them: then some time after that, when they shall be in the deepest security (as it was with the old world in the days of Noah, and with the city of Sodom in the days of Lot) shall sudden destruction come upon them (from ver. 24 to 31).

4. He advises them, that when they shall see judgment thus breaking out upon them; that every one that is in Judæa should make all possible speed to get out of it, as Lot and his family did out of Sodom, and take heed of imitating Lot's wife, who, looking back, became a pillar of salt, Gen. xix. 26. (ver. 31, 32.)

5. He declares, that he who shall then take any unchristian course to preserve his life, by denying him and his gospel, shall lose the true life, which is eternal salvation; but he that shall lose his life for his sake and the gospel's, instead of a mortal, shall enjoy an immortal life in bliss and glory.

6. He further shews, that in that terrible time (which may well be called a night of calamities), there will be much of God's distinguishing mercy and providence discerned in rescuing one from that calamity whereby another shall fall, some staying in Judæa, others (as by an invisible hand of providence) being hurried out of it, and so escaping the danger. Ver. 34, 35, 36.

7. His disciples, hearing him speak of such tremendous calamities, ask him where these things would happen? he answers them, that "Wheresoever the carcase is, thither will the eagles be gathered together;" by which proverbial speech he gives them to understand that Jerusalem, and the obdurate nation of the Jews, was that carcase which the Roman armies (whose ensign is the eagle) would quickly find out and seize upon, and that Judæa would be the stage of these tragical miseries. Ver. 37.

* Josephus witnesses that about these times there were great store of seducers, some of whom called them out into the desert; others unto the mount of Olives, and pretended they would be their deliverers: among whom also may be reckoned that Egyptian, Acts. xxi. 38. Joseph. Antiq. and Wars.

Now Christ encourages his disciples to fervency, importunity, and perseverance in prayer, and not to faint, from the parable of the importunate widow prevailing with an unjust judge; which if she could do, they might conclude that they should prevail with God, who is a just avenger of those that fear him, though he may seem slow in vindicating and righting them. Therefore they should not give over earnestly seeking him, nor suffer their faith or fervency to fail: yet he intimates, that when he shall come to take vengeance on the obstinate Jews, and to destroy their city, he shall find but little of this faith, and patient waiting for help from God, in the land of Judæa, and consequently little importuning him with incessant cries and supplications, as this poor widow did the unjust judge.

He now reproves the pride and arrogant opinion of the scribes and Pharisees, and other self-justifiers, who trusted in their own righteousness, and despised others, by the parable of two persons going up to the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a publican. The Pharisee magnifying himself, and his own merit, and confessing no faults, addressed himself to God, in this manner: "God, I thank thee I am not such a sinner as other men are; I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes of herbs, and every thing of which others doubt (it being not determined by the law) whether they are titheable or no."

The publican, standing afar off in the court of the Gentiles, (where all sorts of people, publicans and strangers, might come, 1 Kings viii. 41, 42.) in deep humility, and affected with a sense of his own unworthiness and contrition for his sins, not daring to lift up his eyes to heaven, smote on his breast, saying, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!" This man being truly penitent, and humbly abhorring himself, was justified, and found mercy and acceptance with God; whereas the other did not, who justified himself, and was so far from forsaking his sins, that he did not so much as confess them.

Christ now departs from Galilee, and crossing Jordan, goes through those coasts towards Judæa, and many from all parts thereabouts resorting unto him, he taught them, and healed those that were sick among them.

The Pharisees afterwards came to him with this question, to insnare him: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause?" that is, for such common and ordinary causes as hatred, or dislike, conceived against her, as the manner of the Jews was then to do? They thought by this question to intrap him: for if he answered affirmatively, then he would contradict his former doctrine; if negatively, then they should have matter enough against him, for seeming to cross the doctrine of Moses, as also for opposing himself against the common practice of the times, which would bring him into hatred with the people. Our Saviour replies, that they cannot but remember the strict union and conjunction betwixt man and wife, ordained by God in the creation, Gen. i. 27. and Gen. ii. 24. and that which hath been thus instituted by God, must not by man be altered; therefore it is unlawful (unless in case of unfaithfulness to the husband's bed, Mat. v. 32.) to put the wife away. The Pharisees demanded then an account of that precept in the law, wherein Moses appointed the husband (in that case by him mentioned, Deut. xxiv. 1, 2.) to give a bill of divorce unto the wife, and so permitted him to put her away. Christ answers, that God, in the Mosaic economy, knowing the Jews to be so obstinately bent to their own wills and lusts, that in case they were obliged to live with hated wives, and not permitted divorces, it would probably cause in them some greater sin (as murdering the wife, or the like); therefore, for the preventing hereof, he tolerated divorces, and took so much pity of the oppressed hated wife, as to provide this kind of relief for her. But this was very far from the appointment of God in the first institution of marriage; and accordingly he declares, that that liberty is not to be made use of, but only in the case of fornication (viz. incontinence on the part of the wife after marriage), by reason of the strict union there is between man and wife, and that by God's own ordinance from the beginning, ver. 7, 8, 9. Hereupon his own disciples began to object, that if marriage brought such an inseparable conjunction with it, and subjected a man to such possible inconveniences, it were better not to marry at all. To this he answers, that all are not capable of single life, but they only whom God hath fitted for it by some special gift, 1 Cor. vii. 7. for some live chastely unmarried; as being naturally enabled so to do, and that without any

any great difficulty; some, as being by men disabled (of which sort there were very great many among Heathens ordinarily called eunuchs); some by abstinence and temperance, by fasting and prayer, and a strict watchfulness, have acquired that mastery over themselves, that they can live chastely in a single life; and do so, on purpose that they may have fuller leisure to set themselves apart for the duties of christianity. Now he that finds this agreeable to his condition, shall do well and wisely in disposing of himself accordingly.

About this time, some brought their little children to Christ, to be blessed by him, it being the custom for parents to desire and seek to have their children in this manner blessed, by such persons as were of eminent graces, gifts, and authority. Thus, Gen. xlviii. 12, 13, 14, 15. Joseph brought his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, to be blessed by Jacob his father in time of his sickness. These parents, probably, seeing how ready and forward Christ was to do good to those that came unto him, persuaded themselves, that by his prayers, and laying his hands on their children, they should be preserved from bodily diseases, and from Satan's power, and that he would confer on them all needful blessings, spiritual and temporal. But his disciples thinking it unfit, it seems, that their Lord and Master should be interrupted and troubled with such little infants and children brought unto him, especially at a time when he was engaged in those serious and weighty matters of preaching and working miracles, they rebuked those that brought them. Our Saviour, who had testified his love to little children not long before, by calling one of them, and taking him in his arms, and setting him in the midst of them, as a pattern of humility (Mark ix. 36.), was much offended with his disciples for this, and commands them to suffer little children to be brought unto him, and asserts, that they are such to whom the kingdom of heaven, that is, the gospel privileges, belong. He further declares, that they who are of riper years (if they will be his disciples) must be so changed, converted, and renewed, by the effectual work of grace in their hearts, that they must resemble little children in temper and disposition, and in those properties wherein they may be patterns to us, viz. in humility and innocency, harmlessness, freedom from malice; in teachableness, cleaving unto, and depending on their parents, and preferring them before all others, and contentedness with their own condition. Then he took those little children, that were brought unto him, in his arms; and the more to confirm the faith of their parents, and assure them of his good will to them, and of his readiness to do them good, he put his hands on them, and blessed them. Which blessing of them implies two things: 1. That he commended them to God in prayer; as he was man, and as he was Mediator. 2. That he actually conferred on them those spiritual blessings which he prayed for: and this he did as he was God.

Jesus now going from the private house where he was before, and where he had answered the Pharisees about the matter of divorce, and whither the young children had been brought to him to be blessed by him, as he was in the way, a young man of great authority among the Jews, and very rich, having a great zeal to be resolved, came running after him, and in great humility and reverence kneeled to him, asking him, "Good Master, What must I do to inherit eternal life?" He seems to move this question out of a good intent, and to learn of Christ, and not to intrap him, as that lawyer or scribe is said to have done, whom we met with before; though he was much tainted with an erroneous opinion of his own righteousness, and a conceit of obtaining eternal life by his own good works. Mat. xix. ver. 16.

Our Saviour tells him, that his calling him Good, without conceiving him to be God as well as man (which it seems he did not, but only a very holy man), was not right; since there is none perfectly, originally, and immutably good, but only God, who is goodness itself. But in answer to his question, he tells him, if he expected to obtain eternal life by his own good works, he must then keep the commandments of the moral law fully and perfectly, and particularly refers him to the duties of the second table, mentioning the substance of them (not standing curiously upon the order), and enlarging something upon the eighth, "Thou shalt not steal," by adding, "Defraud not," that is, Wrong not thy neighbour

neighbour in his goods or outward estate; under which commandment covetousness is forbidden, to which this man was too much addicted, as appears afterwards. And he sends him to the second table, because many hypocrites more easily conceal their impiety, by making great shews of obedience to the first, and performing outward duties of religion towards God; but are discovered by failing in duties of charity and justice towards men, required in the second table: he sends him therefore to these commandments, requiring him to keep them perfectly, if he would enter into life; that so by this means he might bring him to a sight of his sins, and the imperfection of his obedience to the law, and thereupon to seek for salvation by faith in him, the true Messiah, ver. 17, 18, 19. Mark x. 18, 19.

The young man replies, he had "kept all these from his youth," that is, he had not lived in an outward or manifest violation of any of them. Jesus, looking on him, shewed some signs of a kind inclination and pity towards him, as a person solicitous about attaining eternal happiness, and whose outward behaviour had been so fair, and yet deceived himself with an opinion of his own righteousness. Knowing therefore his covetousness, and that he might touch the secret sore of his mind, he gives him this extraordinary command to try him, and make his imperfection appear; he bids him (if he would approve himself to God, to be perfect, as he vainly dreamed) to "go and sell all, and give to the poor." This is no evangelical counsel of perfection (as the Papists call it), but a special command given by Christ, at this time, to this man, to convince him of his secret covetousness; that his disobedience thereunto might discover to him that he loved not God above all, which is the principal thing in the law; nor his neighbour as he ought, seeing at the command of Christ he was unwilling to part with his goods to relieve the poor. And by the breach of one commandment, the authority of God the lawgiver is contemned, as much as by the breach of all, ver. 21. The young man, hearing this, went away sorrowful, for he had a great estate, ver. 22.

Then our Saviour, turning to his disciples, and expressing his tender love to them, by calling them children, shewed them how difficult a thing it is for a covetous rich man, "that trusts in his riches" Mark x. 24. and in whose heart the love of worldly wealth predominates, to be saved (1 Cor. vi. 10). "Nor thieves," says the apostle, "nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Our Lord further enforces his argument by that proverbial speech, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Ver. 23, 24.

His disciples being startled at the severity of this doctrine, and considering with themselves how common and natural to all men the sin of covetousness is, began to ask, "Who then can be saved?" He therefore mollifies the harshness of it, by shewing them, that the thing is very possible, by the assistance of grace, and the sanctifying Spirit of God, working in those, who were covetous worldlings, a change of heart and a willingness to forsake their sin, and to come out of this dangerous snare of the devil (as we see in the examples of Matthew the publican, and Zacchæus); and not only so, but preparations of mind also, to forsake not only riches, but life itself, for Christ's sake, and the gospel's, if he call them to it, Mat. xix. 25, 26.

The apostles having heard him bid the young man, "Go, sell all, and give to the poor, and he should have treasure in heaven;" Peter in his own name, and the names of the rest, declares, that they had left all, and followed him, and therefore desired to know what recompence they should have for it. They seem, however, to be not so much solicitous about the reward that should be given them in heaven, as about some reward they hoped for on earth, dreaming still of an earthly kingdom Christ should have, wherein they looked for eminent dignities, which favoured of a mercenary mind, ver. 27.

Christ answers Peter by making a twofold promise; one peculiar to the apostles, the other, common to all that have left any thing for his sake.

1. He promises the apostles, instead of earthly preferments, which they too much hankered after), that in the regeneration, that is, the resurrection, when the faithful shall be perfectly renewed both in soul and body [Acts iii. 21. 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43. Phil. iii. 20, 21.],

they shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. All the saints shall give their voice, and approve Christ's righteous judgment, 1 Cor vi. 2, 3. But the apostles, above all the rest, shall sit as it were on the bench with him, and Christ shall give judgment according to their doctrine preached in the world, Luke xxii. 28, 29, 30.

2. He promises to all other christians (who had forsaken any thing dear to them in this world for his sake, and the gospel's) an hundred-fold recompence, even in this life, Mark x. 30, telling them, that, in the midst of their persecutions and losses, they shall be an hundred-fold more happy than they were before: and the graces, gifts, and comforts of his spirit, which he will then afford them, shall be an hundred-fold better portion to them, than any thing they can be deprived of: and besides this, in the world to come they shall have eternal life, and everlasting bliss and happiness, ver. 28, 29,

Lastly, Our Saviour, observing that Peter, and the other apostles, had too high a conceit of themselves and their obedience, shewed, in forsaking all, and following of him (as mentioned before), gives them a serious admonition, not to be over-confident of themselves, and of their good beginnings, but to be humble-minded, and to be concerned that they persevere and are constant in their christian course, lest otherwise they lose the reward promised: for he admonishes them, that many of those who have begun well, and for the present seem forward in an outward profession of the gospel, and consequently nearest the kingdom of heaven and eternal life, and to have an undoubted right to the reward promised, will afterwards fall away, discovering their hypocrisy and unsoundness, and so will manifest themselves to be last and hindmost of all as to the truth of christianity, and consequently as to any right and title to the kingdom of heaven, from which they shall be utterly excluded: and though these persons were possibly in their own eyes, and before men first, yet they shall be found last, that is of no esteem with God; but, on the contrary, some that seem hindmost as to the profession of Christ, being not yet called thereunto, and so appear farthest off from any right and title to eternal life, shall in time come to be called to the true and sincere profession of the gospel, and shall shew themselves very forward therein, and outstrip others that seemed to be far before them, and consequently shall be first in the kingdom of heaven, that is, partakers of it before those who in time past were before them in an outward profession of christianity, and seemed before men to be children of the kingdom, ver. 30. See Luke xiii. 30.

For the further opening to them the meaning of what he had immediately before said ["many that are first shall be last, and the last first"], and to keep his disciples from any conceit of merit in the services they had done for him, he makes use of the parable of an householder hiring labourers at several hours of the day into his vineyard, and some but an hour before sun-set, and yet paying them every one a penny; which occasioned some that were hired in the morning to murmur, that they who were hired last were made equal with them in their pay. The scope of which parable is to shew, that God freely calls whom and when he will; that they who are called first in time, should not boast over others; for they who are called afterward, shall be rewarded by him, as well as others who were called before: that they who are conceited of the merit of their works, are in no estimation with him: that those labourers who esteemed much of their labour, notwithstanding they had wrought longer than others, yet were last taken notice of, and least esteemed of; but such as had no confidence in their own works, were first rewarded, and liberally dealt with: for God's rewards and retributions spring from his own goodness and gracious promise, not man's deserts. Thus "the last shall be first, and the first last." Hereby he gives them to understand, that it is a mercy to be employed by him, and a greater mercy to have a low estimation of ourselves, and whatsoever we do or suffer for him. And possibly hereby he intended also to suggest, that the believing Gentiles, who were called after the Jews, shall have their penny, as well as the believing Jews: therefore the Jews, though they were God's people before the Gentiles, yet ought not to murmur that God hath equalled the Gentiles with them, as to the privileges of the covenant of grace, and an interest in Christ; for many among the Jews, of high esteem and reputation

reputation for religion in the world's account (such as the Pharisees), will be shut out of heaven, when despised ones among the Gentiles, that are truly converted, shall be rewarded with eternal glory. Neither need this seem strange; for many are outwardly called by the preaching of the word, who have not the internal call added to the outward, whereby God by his Holy Spirit effectually touches the heart, works a real conversion in us, and thereby manifests to us our election, and declares us to be his children.

Lazarus of Bethany being now sick, his sisters send to Christ in his behalf, acquainting him "that he whom he loved was sick." Hearing of it, Jesus tells the messenger, "this sickness shall not bring upon him such a death as they feared," and then stays two days where he was, that in the mean time Lazarus might die, and so God might be the more glorified, and his Son believed on as the omnipotent and true God, equal with the Father, by working such a wonderful miracle as was the raising him to life again.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS on CHRIST's raising Dead LAZARUS to Life.

It was a great act to turn water into wine; but it was a greater to feed five thousand with five loaves: it was much to restore the ruler's son; it was more to cure him that had been thirty-eight years a cripple: it was much to cure him that was born blind; it was more to raise up Lazarus that had been so long dead. As a stream runs stronger and wider, the nearer it comes to the ocean whence it was derived, so didst thou, O Saviour, work more powerfully, the nearer thou didst approach to thy glory. This was, as one of thy last, so of thy greatest miracles; when thou wert ready to die thyself, thou raisest him to life who smelt strong of the grave. None of all the sacred histories is so full and punctual as this, in the report of all circumstances; other miracles do not more transcend nature, than this transcends other miracles.

This alone was a sufficient evidence of thy godhead, O blessed Saviour; none but an infinite power could so far surpass nature as to recall a man four days dead, from not a mere privation, but a settled corruption. Earth must needs be thine, from which thou raisest his body; heaven must needs be thine, from whence thou fetchest his spirit: none but he that created man can thus make him new.

Sickness is the common preface to death; no mortal person is exempted from this complaint: even Lazarus, whom Jesus loved, is sick; what can strength of grace, or dearneſs of respect, prevail against disease, against dissolution!

It was a striking message that Mary sent to Jesus, "He whom thou lovest is sick;" as if she would imply, that his part was no less valuable in Lazarus than hers; neither doth she say, He that loves thee is sick; but, "he whom thou lovest:" not pleading the merit of Lazarus's affection to Christ, but the mercy and favour of Christ to him; though indeed that other reflection of love had been no mean motive; for, O Lord, thou hast said, "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him;" thy goodness will not be behind us for love, who profess to love them that love thee. But the argument is still more forcible from thy love to us; since thou hast just reason to respect every thing of thine own, more than aught that can proceed from us. What can such frail men as we are stick at, where we love? Thou, O infinite God, art love itself: whatever thou hast done for us proceeds from thy love: the ground and motive of all thy mercies is within thyself not in us; and if there be aught in us worthy of thy love, it is thine own, not ours; thou givest what thou acceptest. Jesus well heard the first groan of his dear Lazarus; every short breath that he drew, every sigh that he gave, was placed to account; yet this Lord of life lets his Lazarus sicken, languish, and die: not out of neglect, or impotence, but out of power and resolution: "This sickness is not to death." He, to whom the issues of death belong, knows the way both into it, and out of it; he meant that sickness should be to death, in respect of the present condition;

dition; not to death, in respect of the event: to death in the process of nature; not to death in the success of his divine power, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Oh Saviour, thy usual style is the Son of man; thou that wouldst take up our infirmities, wert willing thus to hide thy godhead under the coarse weeds of our humanity; but here thou sayest, "That the Son of God might be glorified;" though thou wouldst hide thy divine glory, yet thou wouldst not smother it: sometimes thou wouldst have thy sun break forth in bright gleams, to shew that it hath no less light even while it seems kept in by the clouds. Thou wert now near thy passion; it was most seasonable for thee at this time to set forth thy just title; neither was this an act, that thy humanity could challenge to itself; but far transcending all finite powers: to die, was an act of the Son of man; to raise from death, was an act of the Son of God.

Neither didst thou say merely, that God, but, "that the Son of God might be glorified." God cannot be glorified, unless the Son be so. Even in natural relations, the wrong or disrespect offered to the child reflects upon the father; as, contrarily, the parents upon the child; how much more, where the love and respect is infinite! where the whole essence is communicated with the intireness of relation! O God, in vain shall we tender our devotions to thee, indefinitely, as to a glorious, and incomprehensible majesty, if we kiss not the son; who hath most justly said, "Ye believe in the Father, believe also in me."

What a happy family was this! I find none upon earth so much honoured; "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Here is no standing upon terms of precedence: the Spirit of God is not curious in marshalling of places. Time was when Mary was confessed to have chosen the better part; here Martha is named first, as most interested in Christ's love; for aught that appears, all of them were equally dear; Christ had familiarly lodged under their roof; how fit was that to receive him, whose inhabitants were hospitable, pious, unanimous! Hospitable in the welcome entertainment of Jesus and his train; pious in their devotions; unanimous in their mutual concord; so, on the other hand, he passes by and hates that house which is taken up with uncharitableness, profaneness, and contention.

But, O Saviour, how can this be reconciled? Thou lovedst this family; yet, hearing of their distress, thou keptest thyself two days more from them? Canst thou love those thou regardest not? canst thou regard them from whom thou willingly absentest thyself in their necessity? Behold, thy love, as it is above ours, so it is often against ours. Even out of very affection, art thou not frequently absent? None of thine, but have sometimes cried, "How long, Lord?" What need we instance, when thine eternal Father did purposely estrange his face from thee, so that thou criedst out of being forsaken?

Here thou wouldst knowingly delay, whether for the sake of increasing the miracle, or for strengthening of thy disciples faith. Hadst thou gone sooner, and prevented the death, who had known whether strength of nature, and not thy miraculous power, had done it? hadst thou overtaken his death by this quickening visitation, who had known whether this had been only some qualm, or ecstasy, and not a perfect dissolution? now this large interval of time makes thy work both certain and glorious. And what a clear proof was this beforehand to thy disciples, that thou wert able to accomplish thine own resurrection on the third day, who wert able to raise up Lazarus on the fourth! The more difficult the work should be, the more need it had of an omnipotent confirmation.

He that was Lord of our times, and his own, can now, when he found it seasonable, say, "Let us go into Judæa again." Why left he it before? was it not upon the headstrong violence of his enemies? Lo, the stones of the Jews drove him thence; the love of Lazarus, and the care of his divine glory, drew him back thither again.

We may, we must be wise as serpents, for our own preservation; we must be careless of danger, when God calls us to the field. It is far from God's purpose to give us leave so far to respect ourselves, as that we should neglect him. Let Judæa be all snares,
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all crosses, O Saviour, when thou callest us, we must put our lives into our hands, and follow thee thither.

This journey thou hast purposed, and contrived, but what needest thou to acquaint thy disciples with thine intent? Where didst thou ever, except on this occasion, make them privy to thy journies? Neither didst thou say, How think you, if I go? but, "Let us go;" was it because thou, who knewest thine own strength, knew also their weakness? thou wast resolute, they were timorous; they were sensible enough of their late peril, and fearful of more; there was need to forearm them with an expectation of the worst and preparation for it; surprisal with evils may endanger the best constancy: the heart is apt to fail, when it finds itself intrapped in a sudden mischief.

The disciples were dearly affected to Lazarus; they had learned to love where their Master loved; yet now, when our Saviour speaks of returning to that region of peril, they pull him as it were by the sleeve, and put him in mind of the violence offered to him; "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?"

No less than thrice in the foregoing chapter did the Jews lift up their hands to murder him by stoning; whence was this rage and bloody attempt of theirs? only because he taught them the truth concerning his divine nature; and gave himself the just style of the Son of God. How subject carnal hearts are to be impatient of heavenly truths! Nothing can so much fret that malignant spirit, which rules in those breasts, as that Christ should have his own. If we be persecuted for his truth, we do but suffer with him, with whom we shall ere long reign.

How much soever the disciples pleaded for their Master's safety, yet they aimed at their own; they well knew their danger was connected with his. It is but a plausible colour that they put upon their own fear; this is held but a weak and base passion; every person would be glad to put off the imputation of it from himself, and to set the best face upon his own infirmity.

Thus faint-hearted men, that shrink and shift from the cross, will not want fair pretences to evade it. One pleads the peril of many dependents; another, the unfurnishing the church of succeeding members; each will have some plausible excuse for his sound skin. What error did not our Saviour rectify in his followers! Even that fear which they would have dissembled, is graciously dispelled by the just consideration of a sure and inevitable providence: "Are there not twelve hours in the day," which are duly set, and proceed regularly for the direction of all the motions and actions of men? So in this course of mine, which I must run on earth, there is a set and determined time wherein I must work, and do my Father's will. The sun that guides these hours is the determinate counsel of my Father, as well as his calling to the execution of my charge: while I follow that, I cannot miscarry; no more than a man can miss his known way at high noon; at this time in vain are either your dissuasions, or the attempts of enemies; they cannot hurt, ye cannot divert me.

The journey then holds to Judæa; his attendants shall be made acquainted with the occasion: he that had formerly denied the deadly issue of Lazarus's sickness, would not suddenly confess his death; neither yet would he altogether conceal it; and he will therefore so confess it, as that he will shadow it out in a borrowed expression, "Lazarus our friend sleepeth." What a sweet title both of death, and of Lazarus! Death is a sleep, Lazarus is our friend; observe, he says not "my friend," but "ours," to draw them first into a gracious familiarity and communion of friendship with himself: for what doth this import, but, 'Ye are my friends,' and Lazarus is both my friend and yours: "Our friend."

Oh meek and merciful Saviour, that disdainest not to stoop so low; as that, while thou thoughtest it no robbery to be equal to God, thou thoughtest it no disparagement to match thyself with weak and wretched men; "Our friend Lazarus." There is a kind of parity in friendship; there may be love where is the greatest inequality; but friendship supposes pairs; yet the Son of God says of the sons of men, "Our friend Lazarus." Oh what a high and happy condition is this for mortal men to aspire to, that the God of heaven should not be ashamed to own them for friends! Neither saith he now abruptly, 'Lazarus our friend is dead,' but "Lazarus our friend sleepeth."

Who is afraid, after the weary toils of the day, to take his rest by night? Or what is more refreshing to the spent traveller, than a sweet sleep? It is our infidelity, our unpreparedness, that makes death any other than advantage. Even so, Lord, when thou seest I have toiled enough, let me sleep in peace; and when thou seest I have slept enough, awake me, as thou didst thy Lazarus: "But I go to awake him." Thou saidst not, 'Let us go to awake him;' they whom thou wilt admit companions of thy way, thou wilt not make partners of thy work; they may be witnesses, they cannot be actors; none can awake Lazarus out of this sleep, but he that made Lazarus: every mouse or gnat can raise us up from that other sleep: none but an omnipotent power, from this. This sleep is not without a dissolution; who can command the soul to come down and meet the body, or command the body to peace with itself and soon after to rise up to the soul, but the God that created both! It is our comfort and assurance, O Lord, against the terrors of death, and bands of the grave, that our resurrection depends upon nothing less than thy omnipotence.

Who can blame the disciples, if they were loth to return to Judæa? Their last entertainment was such, as might justly dishearten them: were this (as taken literally) all the reason of our Saviour's purpose of so perilous a voyage, they argued not amiss, "If he sleep, he shall do well." Sleep in sickness is a good sign of recovery; for, extremity of pain excludes rest; when nature therefore finds so much respiration, she justly hopes for better terms. Yet it doth not always follow, "If he sleep, he shall do well." How many have died in lethargies! How many have lost in sleep what they would not have been deprived of waking? Adam slept, and lost his rib; Sampson slept, and lost his strength; Saul slept, and lost his weapon; Ishbosheth and Holofernes slept, and lost their heads. In the ordinary course of things it holds well; here they mistook and erred; the misconstruction of the words of Christ led them into an unseasonable and erroneous suggestion. Nothing can be more dangerous than to take the speeches of Christ according to the sound of the letter: one error will be sure to draw on more; and if the first be never so slight, the last may be important.

Wherefore are words but to express meanings? why do we speak, but to be understood? Since then our Saviour saw himself not rightly construed, he delivers himself plainly; "Lazarus is dead." Such is thy manner, O thou eternal Word of thy Father, in all thy sacred expressions. Thy own mouth is thy best commentary; what thou hast more obscurely said in one passage, thou interpretest more clearly in another. Thou art the sun, which gives us that light whereby we see thyself.

But how modestly dost thou discover thy deity to thy disciples! not upon the first mention of Lazarus's death, instantly professing thy power, and will of his revival, but contenting thyself only to intimate thy omniscience; in that thou couldst, in that absence and distance, know and report his departure; they shall gather the rest, and cannot choose but think we serve a master that knows all things; and he that knows all things, can do all things.

The absence of our Saviour from the death-bed of Lazarus was not casual, but voluntary; yea, he is not only willing with it, but glad of it; "I am glad, for your sakes, that I was not there." How contrary may the affections of Christ and ours be, and both be yet good! The two worthy sisters were much grieved at our Saviour's absence, as thinking it might favour of some neglect: Christ was glad of it, for the advantage of his disciples' faith: I cannot blame them, that they were thus sorry; I cannot but bless him, that he was thus glad: the gain of their faith in so divine a miracle, was more than could be countervailed by their momentary sorrow. God and we are not alike affected with the same events: he laughs where we mourn; he is angry, where we are pleased.

The difference of the affections arises from the difference of the objects, which Christ and they apprehend in the same occurrence. Why are the sisters sorrowful? Because upon Christ's absence Lazarus died. Why was Jesus glad he was not there? For the benefit which he saw would accrue to their faith. There is much variety of prospect in every act, according to the several intentions and issues thereof, yea even in the very same eyes; the father
sees

sees his son combating in a battle for his country; he sees blows and wounds on the one side; he sees renown and victory on the other: he grieves at the wounds, he rejoices in the honour. Thus doth God in all our afflictions; he sees our tears, and hears our groans, and pities us; but withal he looks upon our patience, our faith, our crown, and is glad that we are afflicted.

O strange consequence! "Lazarus is dead;" nevertheless, "Let us go unto him." Must they not needs think, what should we do with a dead man? What should separate, if death cannot? Even those whom we loved dearest, we avoid when once dead; now we lay them aside under the board; and thence, send them out of our houses to their grave. Neither hath death more horror in it, than noisomeness; and if we could prevail on our eyes to endure the horrid aspect of death in the face we loved, yet can we persuade our scent to like that smell that arises up from their corruption? O love stronger than death! Behold here a friend, whom the very grave cannot sever.

CHAPTER XI.

CHRIST SETS OUT ON HIS JOURNEY TOWARDS JERUSALEM. AMBITIOUS REQUEST OF THE TWO SONS OF ZEBEDEE. THE RAISING OF LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD. PART II. CONVERSION OF THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND PHARISEES, AND ADVICE OF CAIAPHAS CONCERNING CHRIST. MARY ANOINTS JESUS AT THE HOUSE OF SIMON THE LEPER. CHRIST'S SOLEMN AND TRIUMPHANT ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM, WHICH HE WEEPS OVER FOR THEIR UNBELIEF AND OBSTINATE REJECTION OF HIM THE MESSIAH.

JESUS now sets forth from beyond Jordan into Judæa, strictly so called; and being upon his last journey towards Jerusalem, he communicates to his disciples what would happen to him there, namely, that he should be put to death, and rise again the third day. He had twice before intimated the same to them (Mark viii. 31. and ix. 31); and now he acquaints them therewith again, the better to arm and prepare them against the scandal of his cross. They being full of thoughts and fears concerning their own and their Master's safety, endeavour to dissuade him from going thither, putting him in mind of the danger he lately there escaped of being stoned by the Jews. To whom he replies, that as he that walks in the day, having the light of the sun to guide him, is in no danger of stumbling, or falling, or hurting himself; but only in the night, when that light is gone, he is in danger: so, as long as he had a call from God, and time allowed him wherein to exercise his function (which was now but short), there was a Divine Providence about him, that would secure him against all danger: and till that time be past, and that Providence withdrawn, he should be safe even to the time of his passion, which he calls night, and the power of darkness, Luke xxii. 55. For it is not in the power of any man to precipitate the day; nor to bring on the night before the appointed time. But his disciples, it seems, still dreaming of a temporal kingdom, did not for the present understand how that which he spake, concerning his death and passion, could consist with that temporal greatness they expected he should be possessed of.

The sons of Zebedee, James and John, conceiving (according to the notion of the Jews then current) that the Messiah should have an earthly kingdom, or at least such a kingdom as should be administered after an earthly manner, and should be accompanied with such outward glory as the kingdoms of this world are accustomed to be; and desiring timely to provide for themselves, so as to get superiority above the rest; came with their mother Salome to him, and petitioned him, "that they might sit, one on his right hand, and the other on his left in his kingdom." It may be they being persons of eminent gifts, and a powerful ministry (for which he had called them Boanerges, sons of thunder, Mark iii. 17); and having been so highly honoured by him, as to be taken

up with him into the mount, when he was transfigured; they had from hence encouraged themselves to make such a request, Matt. xx. 20, 21.

Our Lord tells them, they knew not what they asked: they were miserably ignorant of the nature and quality of his kingdom, which was wholly spiritual. To cool their ambition, he puts them in mind of abasement, and suffering afflictions with him; he tells them of crosses, persecutions, and martyrdoms, under the phrases of "drinking of his cup" (see Psalm lxxv. 8. Ezek. xxiii. 31, 32.), and "being baptized with his baptism;" and asks them if they were able to partake with him in such sufferings, and to be plunged in those deep waters of afflictions and miseries which he was shortly to be plunged into? ver. 22.

The other apostles were much offended at the ambitious suit of these two: here-upon our Saviour calling them all to him, he 1. Dissuades them from ambitious seeking after dignity and pre-eminence one above another, as rulers and great men among the Gentiles do, who affect and delight to exercise lordship and dominion over others; whose example he tells them they must not follow, either in ambitiously seeking, or taking upon them to exercise any such external power or authority over one another, or over the church of God*; but ought rather to content themselves with that spiritual power and authority committed to them in respect of the souls and consciences of men; which power consists in a due dispensing the word and sacraments, and in the right use and exercise of the spiritual discipline of the church. 2. He exhorts them to the practice of true humility in submitting themselves as servants one to another, intimating unto them the nature and quality of their apostolic office, viz. that it was a ministry and service, not a lordship or dominion, and therefore they ought to carry themselves, in the execution of it, as ministers and servants to the church and people of God, in labouring to procure and further their good. And whoever would be truly great and honourable among them, must thus humbly submit himself: this he further presseth upon them, by his own example and practice, who came not to be ministered unto, as a King or Prince in this world, but to minister to the necessity of others, and to give his very life a ransom for them. Ver. 42.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS on the Ambition of the two Sons of ZEBEDEE.

The suit is half obtained, that is seasonably made. To have made this motion at the entry into their attendance, had been absurd, and had justly seemed to challenge a denial: it was at the parting of the angel, that Jacob would be blessed. The double spirit of Elijah is not sued for, till his ascending.

But, Oh the admirable faith of this good woman! when she heard the discourse of Christ's suffering and death, she talks of his glory; when she hears of his cross; she speaks of his crown. If she had seen Herod come, and tender his sceptre to Christ; or the elders of the Jews come upon their knees, with a submissive proffer of their allegiance; she might have had some reason to entertain the thoughts of a kingdom, but now, while the sound of betraying, suffering, dying, was in her ear, to make account of, and prefer a suit for a room in his kingdom, this argues a belief able to triumph over all discouragements.

It was nothing for the disciples, when they saw him after his conquest of death, and rising from the grave, to ask him, Master wilt thou now restore the kingdom unto Israel? but for a silly woman to look, through his future death and passion, at his resurrection and glory, is no less worthy of wonder than praise.

* This usurping a temporal and external power and jurisdiction over the church of God, and over the pastors and ministers thereof, is made a character of the man of sin, 2 Thess. ii. 4. is disclaimed by Paul, 2 Cor. i. 24. and forbidden by Peter, 1 Pet. v. 3.

To hear a man, in his best health and vigour, talk of his confidence in God, and assurance of divine favour, cannot be deemed extraordinary; but, if in extremities, we can believe above hope, and against hope, our faith is so much more noble as our difficulties are greater. Never sweeter perfume arose from any altar, than that which ascended from Job's dunghill, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

What a strange style is this that is given to this woman? It had been as easy to have said, the wife of Zebedee; or the sister of Mary, or of Joseph, or (as her name was) plain Salome; but now, by an unusual description, she is styled "The mother of Zebedee's children." Zebedee was an obscure man; she, as his wife, was no better; the greatest honour she ever had, or could have, was to have two such sons as James and John; these give a title to both their parents: honour ascends as well as descends; holy children dignify the loins and womb, from whence they proceed, no less than their parents transfer honour unto them: Salome might be a good wife, a good housewife, a good woman, a good neighbour; all these cannot ennoble her so much, as being "The mother of Zebedee's children."

What a world of pain, toil, care, cost, there is in the birth and education of children! Their good proof requites all with advantage. Next to happiness in ourselves, is to be happy in a gracious issue.

The suit was the sons', but by the mouth of their mother: it was their best policy to speak by her lips. Even these fishermen had already learned craftily to fish for promotion: ambition was not so bold in them, as to shew her own face: the envy of the suit might thus be avoided, which could not but follow upon their personal request; if it were granted, they had what they desired; if not, it was but the repulse of a woman's motion; which must needs be so much more pardonable, because it was of a mother for her sons.

It is not discommendable in parents, to seek the preferment of their children; and why may not Abraham sue for an Ishmael? So it be by lawful means, in a moderate measure, in due order, this endeavour cannot be amiss. It is the neglect of circumstances that makes these desires sinful. Oh the madness of those parents, that care not which way they raise an house! That desire rather to leave their children great, than good; that are more ambitious to have their sons lords on earth, than kings in heaven! Yet, I commend thee, Salome, that thy first plot was to have thy sons disciples of Christ, and afterwards to prefer them to the best places of that attendance. It is the true method of divine prudence, O God, first to make our children happy with the honour of thy service, and then to endeavour their suitable advancement upon earth.

The mother is but put upon this suit by her sons; their heart was in her lips. They were not so mortified by their continual conversation with Christ, hearing his heavenly doctrine, seeing his divine carriage, but that their minds were yet roving after temporal honours. Pride is the inmost coat which we put off at last, and put on first. Who can wonder to see some sparks of weak and worldly desires in their holiest teachers, when the blessed apostles were not free from some ambitious thoughts, while they sat at the feet, yea in the bosom of their Saviour?

The near kindred this woman could challenge of Christ might seem to give her just colour of more familiarity; yet now, that she comes upon a suit, she submits herself to the lowest posture of suppliants; we need not be taught, that it is fit for petitioners to the great to present their humble supplications upon their knees. O Saviour, if this woman, so nearly allied to thee according to the flesh, coming but upon a temporal occasion to thee, being as then, encompassed about with human infirmities, adored thee, before she durst sue to thee: with what reverence ought we to approach thee on spiritual suits, sitting now in the height of heavenly glory and majesty! Say then, thou wife of Zebedee, what is it that thou cravest of thine Omnipotent Kinsman? "A certain thing." Speak out, woman, what is this certain thing that thou cravest? How poor and weak is this supplicatory anticipation to him, that knew thy thoughts before thou utterdest them, before thou entertainedst them! We are all in this tune; every one would have something: such, perhaps, as we are ashamed to utter: the proud man would have a

certain thing; honour in the world: the covetous would have a certain thing too; wealth and abundance: the malicious would have a certain thing; revenge on his enemies: the epicure would have pleasure and long life; the barren, children; the wanton, beauty; each one would be humoured in his own desire; though in variety, yea, in contradiction to others; though, in opposition not more to God's will, than our own good!

He that knew all their thoughts afar off, yet, as if he had been a stranger to their purposes, asks, "What wouldst thou?" Our infirmities do then best shame us, when they are fetched out of our own mouths; so likewise our prayers serve not to acquaint God with our wants, but to make us more sensible of his mercies.

The suit is drawn from her; now she must speak: "Grant that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, the other on thy left, in thy kingdom."

It is hard to say, whether this request was made more out of pride or ignorance. It was a received and erroneous conceit, among the very disciples of Christ, that he should raise up a temporal kingdom over the now-tributary and inflaved people of Israel. The Romans were now their masters; their fancy was, that their Messiah should take off this yoke, and restore to them their former liberty; and so rooted was this opinion, that the two disciples, in their walk to Emmaus, could say, "We trusted it had been he that should have delivered Israel:" and when, after his resurrection, he was walking up Mount Olivet, towards heaven, his very apostles could ask him, "if he would now restore that long-expected kingdom?" How should we mitigate our censures of christian brethren; if either they mistake, or know not some secondary truths of religion, when the domestic attendants of Christ, who heard him every day, till almost the very instant of his ascension, misapprehended the chief cause of his coming into the world, and the state of his kingdom! If our charity may not bear with small faults, what do we who under his name dare connive at greater! Truth is as the sun, bright in itself; yet there are many close corners into which it never shined. O God, if thou open our hearts, we shall take in those beams; and till thou do so, teach us to wait patiently for ourselves, charitably for others.

These fishermen had so much court-wisdom to know that the right hand and the left of any prince were the chief places of honour. Our Saviour had said that his twelve followers should sit upon twelve thrones, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel; this good woman would have her two sons nearest his person; the prime peers of his kingdom. Every one is apt to wish the best to his own: worldly honour is neither worth our pursuit, nor unworthy our acceptance. Salome, had thy mind been even in heaven, and hadst thou intended this desired pre-eminence of that celestial state of glory, yet I know not how to justify thy ambition. Wouldst thou have thy sons preferred to the father of the faithful, to the blessed mother of thy Saviour? That very wish were presumptuous. For me, O God, my ambition shall go so high as to be a saint in heaven, and to live as holily on earth as the best; but for precedency of heavenly honour I do not, I dare not affect it; it is enough for me, if I may lift up my head amongst the heels of thy blessed ones.

The mother asks, the sons have the answer. She was but their tongue, they shall be her ears. God ever imputes the acts to the first mover, rather than to the instrument.

It was a sore check, "Ye know not what ye ask." In our ordinary communication, to speak idly, is sin; but in our suits to Christ, to be so inconsiderate as not to understand our own petitions, must needs be a foul offence.

As faith is the ground of our prayers, so knowledge is the ground of our faith; if we come with indigested requests, we profane that name we invoke.

To convince them of their unsuitness for glory, they are sent to their impotence in suffering; "Are ye able to drink of the cup whereof I shall drink, and to be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized?" O Saviour, even thou who wert one with thy Father, hast a cup of thine own; never potion was so bitter as that which was mixed for thee: yea, even thy draught is ordained; it is not enough for thee to sip of this cup, thou must drink it up to the very dregs. When the vinegar and gall were tendered to thee by men, thou didst but kiss the cup; but when thy Father gave into thy hands a
potion

portion infinitely more distasteful, thou (for our health) didst drink deep of it even to the bottom, and saidst, "It is finished." And shall we repine at those unpleasing draughts of affliction that are tempered for us sinful men, when we see thee, the Son of thy Father's love, thus dieted? We pledge thee, O blessed Saviour, we pledge thee, according to our weakness, who hast begun to us in thy powerful sufferings; only do thou enable us (after some four faces made in our reluctance) yet at last willingly to pledge thee in our constant sufferings for thee!

As thou must be drenched within, so must thou be baptized without. Thy baptism is not of water, but of blood; both these came from thee in thy passion; we cannot be thine, if we partake not of both: if thou hadst grudged thy precious blood to us, well mayst thou challenge some comparatively worthless drops from us.

When they talk of thy kingdom, thou speakest of thy bitter cup, of thy bloody baptism. Suffering is the way to reigning; and "through many tribulations must we enter into the kingdom of heaven." There never was a wedge of gold that did not first pass through the fire; there never was pure grain that did not undergo the flail: in vain therefore shall we dream of our immediate passage from the pleasures and jollity of earth to the glory of heaven. Let who will hope to walk upon roses and violets to the throne of heaven; O Saviour, let me trace thee by the track of thy blood; and by thy red steps follow thee to thine eternal rest and happiness.

I know this is no easy task; else thou hadst never said, "Are ye able?" Who should be able if not they who had been so long blessed with thy presence; informed by thy doctrine, and, as it were, beforehand possessed of their heaven in thee? Thou hadst never made them judges of their power, if thou couldst not have convinced them of their weakness. Alas, how full of feebleness is our body, and our mind of impatience! If but a bee sting our flesh, it swells; and if but a tooth ach, the head and heart complain. How small are the trifles that make us weary of ourselves! What can we do without thee? Without thee, what can we suffer? If thou be not, O Lord, strong in my weakness, I cannot be so much as weak, I cannot so much as be. Oh do thou prepare me for my day, and enable me to endure my trials. "I can do all things through thee that strengthenest me."

The motion of the two disciples was not more full of infirmity than their answer: "We are able:" out of an eager desire of the honour, they are ready to undertake the condition. The best men may be mistaken in their own powers. Alas, poor men, when it came to the issue, they ran away, and I know not whether one went not without his coat. It is one thing to suffer in speculation, another, in practice. There cannot be a worse sign than for a man, in a carnal presumption, to vaunt of his own abilities. How justly doth God suffer that man to be foiled purposely, that he may be ashamed of his own vain self-confidence! O God, let me ever be humbly dejected from a sense of my own insufficiency! Let me give all the glory to thee, and take nothing to myself but my infirmities!

Oh the wonderful mildness of the Son of God! He doth not rebuke the two disciples, either for their ambition in suing, or presumption in undertaking; but, leaving the worst, he takes the best of their answer; and, omitting their errors, he encourages their good intentions. "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with my baptism; but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." I know not whether there be more mercy in the concession, or satisfaction in the denial. Were it not an high honour to drink of thy cup, O Saviour, thou hadst not now promised it as a favour. I am deceived, if what thou grantest were much less than that which thou deniest: to pledge thee in thy own cup, is not much less dignity and familiarity, than to sit by thee. "If we suffer with thee, we shall also reign together with thee." What greater promotion can flesh and blood be capable of, than a conformity to the Lord of glory! Enable me to drink of thy cup; and then set me where thou wilt.

Our Saviour now puts himself on his journey towards Bethany, for the raising of Lazarus. And his way lying through Jericho*, when he came nigh that city, he cures a blind man that sat on the highway side begging, as we find recorded by Luke, ch. xviii. 35, &c.

Passing through the city, he saw Zaccheus, a chief officer, or collector-general among the publicans, who were looked upon as oppressors by the Jews, and often exacted more than the Romans required, which they reserved to themselves, see Luke iii. 13. This man being of low stature, that he might have a sight of Jesus, had got up into a sycamore tree. Our Saviour knowing the hearts of all men, and being well pleased with this man's earnest desire to see him, calls him down, and invites himself to his house, which we do not read he did to any before. Zaccheus hereupon comes down speedily, and receives him with joy and gladness.

Thus God every-where prevents us by his grace, as Theophylact observes, shewing himself a plentiful rewarder of those who diligently seek him; and giving them, who do but put themselves in the way, more than they could ask or think. Zaccheus desired only to see Christ, and he obtains much more, namely, to entertain him at his house, and to hear him open the mysteries of eternal life and salvation.

Many of the people seeing this, murmured, because he was gone to be guest to a man of an evil and reproachful character. Thus the men of the world, who neglect the grace of God themselves, are angry it should be given to others. (See Luke v. 30. Matt. ix. 11. Luke vii. 39.) ver. 7.

Our Saviour, whilst he was in his house, undoubtedly spake many more things to instruct him, and probably Zaccheus spake many more things to our Saviour, than are recorded by the evangelists, whose principal scope is to set down that which may bring us to faith and salvation. However, among other things which Zaccheus spake (which might argue his conversion to be sincere), this is recorded, that he declared he would from that time forward give half his goods to the poor, and would make a fourfold restitution to those he had wronged and injured, in imitation of that which was enjoined, Exod. xxii. 1. "If a man steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep." Ver. 8.

Upon this Christ declares that "salvation was that day come to that house," for Zaccheus† being so truly penitent, and believing in Christ, he was now become a "true son of Abraham," according to the spirit, being chosen by God to "walk in the steps and faith of Abraham, and to do his works," John viii. 39. whereas he was so before only according to the flesh. And possibly many others of his family were at this time also converted by Christ. For he "came to seek and save lost sinners," that is, such as were lost by original and actual sins (as Augustin hath it, Ep. 106), and *pro mortuis natus est ad mortem*, as Fulgentius hath it, he was born to die for the "dead in trespasses and sins," ver. 9, 10.

Then by the parable of a nobleman going into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return, and delivering ten pounds to his ten servants, to employ and improve in his absence, he shews to his disciples and others present (who thought, because he was now going to Jerusalem, he would there immediately take upon him regal authority, and enter upon his kingdom, which they took to be an earthly one, misunderstanding those prophecies, Isaiah ix. 7. Jer. xxiii. 5, 6), that he was to suffer death, and rise again, and go to heaven, and so be installed into his kingdom, and then to return again in an eminent manner. In the mean time, when he ascended on high, he would bestow gifts of education on men, and would employ his apostles after his departure to preach to the Jews (though many of them would prove but obstinate and rebellious citizens, ver. 14.), and to endeavour to gain as many of them as they could; and would

* This city was overthrown by Joshua, Josh. vi. 1, &c.

† His name Zaccheus denotes him to be a Jew, yet Christ reputes him not a child of Abraham till he believes.

reward them proportionably according to their diligence therein (under the phrase of giving cities, intimating spiritual and eternal rewards, which he would give them), when he came to judge the quick and dead. But for such evil servants as did not employ his pound, that is, his spiritual gifts, to his glory, and the edification of others, but looked upon it as a piece of rigidity and austerity in him to exact any fruit or increase of his talents, he would severely punish: and if they thought him so severe an exactor, it should not have made them sluggish, but moved them to the greater diligence. He farther adds, that they who faithfully employ the graces and gifts God hath given them, shall have them increased: but even common graces and gifts shall be taken away from them that employ them not to his glory, and the good of others. Lastly, He foretells them, that he should not be received by the Jews for their king, whose king by right he was, but should be rejected by them, and that they would refuse to submit unto him, upon his apostles' preaching the gospel to them after his resurrection, and that would bring down ruin and destruction upon them, Luke xix. from 11 to 28.

4. As he went out of the city, two blind men (whereof one was Bartimæus, of more special note, it seems, and more taken notice of for his blindness and poverty than the other, and therefore only mentioned by Mark, the other being omitted), understanding that Jesus of Nazareth passed by, cried out, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on us," Mat. xx. 30. By giving him this title, they shewed that they believed him to be the true Messiah and Saviour of mankind, promised in the Old Testament, and foretold by the prophets, and that he was both God and man. This probably they believed in part by the fame of his doctrine and miracles, but more especially by the immediate instinct of the Spirit of God, working this faith in their hearts. The multitude rebuked them, and charged them to hold their peace, apprehending possibly that their clamour and vehement crying out would be some trouble or disturbance to Christ, being hasty in his journey: but the blind men, nothing discouraged, cried out so much the more earnestly, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on us!"

Hereupon Christ stood still, and called them to him, who readily came (Bartimæus, as Mark hath it, ver. 49, casting away his garment, that he might make the greater speed), and humbly begged of him, that they might be "cured of their blindness." Jesus therefore had compassion on them, and "touched their eyes," and immediately they received sight: then he bade them depart in peace, with this comfort, "Their faith hath made them whole:" not that they were cured by the power and virtue of their faith, either as the efficient or the meritorious cause, deserving this at his hands (for the cure was wrought only by the power of Christ, and that freely of his mere grace and mercy), but he ascribes it to the faith of the blind men: 1. Because it was the instrument by which they did apprehend and rest on his power and goodness for obtaining this miraculous cure. 2. Because it was a motive to move Christ the rather to cure them, though no meritorious cause of the cure. The blind men, being thus miraculously cured, forthwith joined themselves to the rest of Christ's followers, glorifying God before them all for this extraordinary benefit.

Christ now, approaching to Bethany, tells his disciples, that Lazarus sleepeth (which shewed his omniscience), and his intent to awaken him out of that sleep, John xi. ver. 11. They understanding his words, of resting by sleep in his sickness, urge that this being a sign of health and recovery, he needed not go to heal him, he would do well enough, ver. 12, 13. Hereupon he tells them plainly, and without a metaphor, that "Lazarus was dead," and it would tend to the confirmation of their faith, that he was not there before, but staid away: and the miracle would be the clearer, and tend more to the glory of God, ver. 14, 15. Thomas seeing Christ resolved to go on towards Jerusalem, notwithstanding the dangers that seemed to threaten him there, invites the rest of his fellow-apostles to go and run the same hazard with him, ver. 16.

Being now come to Bethany (which was little less than two miles from Jerusalem), he found that Lazarus had lain in the grave four days; and many Jews were come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in this their sadness for the loss of their brother, ver. 17, 18, 19.

Martha, as soon as she heard Christ was near at hand, went forth to meet him (Mary staying still in the house); coming to him, she tells him, "If he had been there, her brother had not died:" yet even now, if he pleased, all may be well enough; only in this her faith came short, that she seems not to believe that Christ could do this by his own power, but by obtaining power of God to do it, which was the way of the men of God in former times: for some of the prophets formerly, and some of the apostles afterwards, by a power derived from God, raised the dead; but not, as the authors or principal workers of those miracles, by their own power. But though Christ, as man and mediator, prayed to his Father for power [ver. 41, 42.], yet, as God, he wrought miracles by his own power, being of the same divine essence with the Father, ver. 20, 21, 22.

However, our Saviour meekly passing over this her infirmity, promises her that her brother shall rise again, ver. 23. She readily grants this, and professes to believe the resurrection of all men, and of him in particular at the last day, but staggers at the matter of his being raised immediately, though this be less difficult than the other: and in what she believes concerning a general resurrection, she makes no mention of Christ's power that should be therein exercised, and by which it should be done, ver. 24.

Our Saviour, adapting his answer to cure these mistakes and misapprehensions in her, lays down this general assertion, that "He is the resurrection and the life;" that is (if we take it in its full latitude, and with an eye to Christ's meaning here), he is the author of all resurrection, and of all life, and therefore he was to be eyed in her believing the general resurrection; so that from his power to raise the dead at the great day, she might infer he could even now raise her brother: so likewise he is the life, that is, he, as God, hath power to raise whom and when he will, being himself the fountain of life. But if we take the words more strictly, and in a spiritual sense, with an eye to the words immediately subjoined, then he is the resurrection, in that he first gives spiritual life to dead sinners; and he is the life, in that he continues and preserves that spiritual life conferred by him; which he further illustrates and confirms by asserting, 1. That "he that believes on him, though he were dead, yet shall he live;" which though it be true of believers, who die bodily, that he will raise them to life again, and can do so even now when he pleases; yet the words seem to refer principally to the spiritual resurrection of a dead sinner, viz. that they who were dead by nature, being first enlivened by the infusion of his Spirit, do lay hold on him, by faith, without which all antecedent discoveries and convictions of sin and misery will not avail them; and are thereby made partakers of the first resurrection, and made to live a life of grace. And, 2. "They who live this spiritual life by faith in him shall never die;" wherein he assures her, that true believers are delivered from spiritual and eternal death. So that as he is the resurrection, by raising the dead in sin to a state of spiritual life; so he is the life, by preserving and continuing that life eternally, which he hath begun in them, and conferred on them; insomuch that bodily death shall not extinguish the life that is begun by faith in him. And hereby he seems to lead Martha to eye him as a spiritual raiser of the dead in sin, and to consider the mercy of a spiritual resurrection, when now her thoughts are so much upon the bodily raising of her brother; and so to look upon him as the author both of bodily and spiritual resurrection. Having thus divinely discoursed of these matters, he asks her, if she believes them? ver. 25, 26.

Martha assents to what he required her to believe, and professes her faith concerning his person and office, acknowledging him to be the Messiah promised unto the fathers, and the eternal Son of God, ver. 27. Then, being sent by him, she goes her way, and calls her sister Mary; yet secretly, lest those Jews that were there, knowing of him, might bring him into some hazard, ver. 28.

Mary, as soon as she heard of it, arose quickly, and went to the place where he yet staid without the town, ver. 29, 30. The Jews that were then with her, seeing her rise up so hastily, supposed she went out to weep at the grave (as it seems they had a custom among them to do, that the sight of their loss might awaken their sorrow); and therefore they follow her to interrupt her, and moderate her sorrows, ver. 31. When she came to Christ, she fell down at his feet, and with great humility and reverence, and

and many tears, said as her sister had done before, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," ver. 32.

Christ expresses his sympathy with her, and her afflicted company, and, by groaning in spirit, declares the indignation that was kindled in him against sin, that had drawn on death, and all this sorrow; and manifests a tender affection to her in this her trouble and affliction; yet the commotions of his affections were like the shaking of pure water in a clear glass, which still remains clear, and arose and were calmed at his pleasure. Being thus affected, he inquires for the grave, that he may give a proof of his sympathy; and being desired to come and see where it was, he goes on towards it; and in the way the exercise of his spirit burst out, in weeping in the view of them all, ver. 33, 34, 35.

The Jews, observing his sorrow, admire his love to dead Lazarus, yet wonder that he, who had wrought so many miracles, had not prevented his death, ver. 36, 37.

Our Saviour's sympathy and affection still continues, and is renewed at the sight of the grave, which was a cave with a stone laid upon it. And it seems his prayers, which were very ardent, caused him to groan again, ver. 38. Then he commands them to remove the stone; Martha objects, saying, It was to no purpose, seeing he had been so long dead, and it would raise a noisome smell now to open his grave. Christ reproves this her unbelief, as being very odious, since he had but newly given her a promise, that upon her believing, "she should see the glory of God." Though we find not these express words mentioned by Christ, yet if we compare his general encouragement, ver. 4. with the doctrine he required her to believe, ver. 23, 25, 26. we shall find the same for substance, ver. 39, 40.

The stone being taken away, our Saviour, who had been praying to his Father, does now, 1. Publicly give him thanks for hearing him in that matter, ver. 41. 2. He gives a reason of this his thanksgiving, which was not because it was unusual for him to be heard (who was never refused in any suit), but that they who were there present might be convinced that he was the Mediator, sent and approved of the Father, ver. 42; for though, as God, he is the principal efficient of miracles, and works them by his own power; yet, as man, he is the instrument of the Godhead; and as Mediator, he acts as sent by the Father: therefore he chuses by way of prayer to work this miracle at this time before the people, to manifest that he was owned and approved of God, and not contrary to him, as the Jews gave it out.

This done, he actually works this great miracle, calling with a loud voice unto Lazarus to come forth; and at that word putting life into him to hear and obey, "he immediately came forth, bound hand and foot in grave-cloaths." He requires some to loose him, that so they might be farther convinced of the truth of the miracle, ver. 43, 44.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS on CHRIST's raising LAZARUS from Death: PART II.

Secrecy hath sometimes no less use than discovery. Martha said enough: "The Master is come, and calleth for thee;" what a happy word was this which was here spoken! what a high favour is this that is now done! that the Lord of life should personally come, and call for Mary! yet such amazing condescension was not confined to her; thou comest to us still, O Saviour, if not in thy bodily presence, yet in thy spiritual: thou callest us still; if not with thy personal voice, yet in thine ordinances; it is our fault if we do not, as this good woman, arise quickly, and come to thee. Her friends were there about her, who came purposely to condole with her: her heart was full of heaviness; yet she no sooner hears mention of Christ, than she forgets friends, brother, grief, cares, thoughts, and hastens to his presence.

Still was Jesus standing in the place where Martha left him; which may be noted either to express Mary's speed, or his own wise and gracious resolutions. His presence in the village had perhaps invited danger, and collected together the intended witnesses of the work; or it may be to set forth his zealous desire to dispatch the errand he came for; that

that as Abraham's faithful servant would not receive any courtesy from the house of Bethuel, till he had done his master's business concerning Rebecca; so thou, O Saviour, wouldst not so much as enter into the house of these two sisters in Bethany, till thou hadst effected this glorious work, which occasioned thee to come thither. It was thy meat and drink to do the will of thy Father; thy best entertainment was within thyself: how do we follow thee, if we suffer either pleasures or profits to take the lead of thy services?

Good women were well worthy of kind friends. No doubt Bethany, being not two miles distant from Jerusalem, could not but be furnished with kind acquaintance from the city; these knowing how dear Lazarus was to them, and hearing of his death, came over to comfort the sad sisters. Charity, together with the common practice of that nation, calls them to this duty. All our distresses call for these good offices from those who love us; but, of all others, death, as that which is the most extreme of evils, and makes the fearfulest havock in families, cities, kingdoms, and worlds. The complaint was grievous; "I looked for some to comfort me, but there was none." It is some kind of ease to sorrow, to have partners in it; as a burden is lightened by many shoulders; or as clouds scattered into many drops, easily vent their moisture into air. Yea, the very presence of friends abates grief. The peril that arises to the heart from passion, is the fixedness of it; when like a corrosive plaister, it eats into the fore; some kind of remedy it is, that it may breathe the sorrow out in good society.

These friendly neighbours, seeing Mary hasten forth, quickly followed her; Martha went forth before, I saw none go after her. Mary stirs, and they are at her heels; was it because Martha, being the elder sister, and the housewife of the family, might stir about with less observation? or was it that Mary was the more passionate, and needed the more careful attendance? However, their care and intentiveness is truly commendable; they came to comfort her, and do what they came for. They are not satisfied with sitting still, and conversing within doors, but wait on her on all occasions: perturbations of mind are diseases; good nurses do not only tend the patient in bed, but when he sits up, when he tries to walk; all his motions have their careful assistance. We are no true friends, if our endeavours to assuage distempers in them we love, be not assiduous and unwearied.

It was but a loving suspicion, "She is gone to the grave to weep there." They well knew how apt distressed minds are to take all occasions to renew their sorrow; every object affects them. When she saw but the chamber of her dead brother, straight she thinks, "There Lazarus used to lie;" and then she wept afresh when she was at the table, "There Lazarus used to sit; and then new tears arise when in the garden, "There Lazarus used to walk;" and now again she weeps, and how much more do these friends suppose the passions would be moved, with the sight of the grave, when she must needs think, "There is Lazarus." O Saviour, if the place of the very dead corpse of our friend hath power to draw our hearts thither, and to affect us more deeply; how should our hearts be drawn to, and affected with heaven, where thou sittest at the right hand of thy Father, there (O thou who wast dead, and art alive) are thy body and thy soul present, and united to thy glorious deity: thither, O thither let our access be; not to mourn there (where is no place for sorrow), but to rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorious; and more and more to long for that thy beatifical presence.

Their indulgent love mistook Mary's errand; their thoughts (how kind soever) were much too low: while they supposed she went to a dead brother, she went to a living Saviour. The world hath different ideas of the actions and conduct of the regenerate than are truly intended; setting such constructions upon them as their own carnal reasons suggest: they think them dying, when behold they live; sorrowful, when they are always rejoicing; poor, while they make many rich: how justly do we appeal from them as incompetent judges, and pity those misinterpretations, which we cannot avoid!

Both the sisters met Christ; not both in one posture. Mary is still noted, as for more passion, so for more devotion; she that before sat at the feet of Jesus, now falls at his feet. That presence which used to be familiar to her, and not without some outward homeliness, now fetches her upon her knees in awful veneration; either out of a reverent
acknowledg-

acknowledgment of the secret excellency and power of Christ; or out of a dumb intimation of that suit concerning her dead brother which she was afraid to utter! the very gesture itself was supplicatory: what position of body can be so fit for us, when we make our address to our Saviour! It is an irreligious unmannerliness for us to do less. Where the heart is affected with an awful acknowledgment of majesty, the body cannot but bow.

Even before all her neighbours of Jerusalem, Mary thus falls down at the feet of Jesus; so many witnesses as she had, so many spies she had of that forbidden observance. It was no less than excommunication for any body to confess him; yet good Mary, not fearing the informations that might be given by those ignorant Jewish bigots, adores him; and in her silent gesture says as much as her sister had spoken before, "Thou art the Christ the Son of God;" they who would give Christ his right, must not stand upon scrupulous fears. Are we naturally timorous? Why do we not fear the denial, the exclusion of the Almighty? "Without shall be the fearful."

Her humble prostration is seconded by a lamentable complaint; "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;" the sisters are both in one mind, both in one speech, and both of them in one speech betray both strength and infirmity; strength of faith, in ascribing so much power to Christ, that his presence could preserve from death; infirmity, in supposing the necessity of a presence for this purpose. Why, Mary, could not thine omnipotent Saviour as well in absence have commanded Lazarus to live? Is his hand so short, that he can do nothing but by contraction? If his power were finite, how could he have forbidden the seizure of death; if infinite, how could it be limited to place, or hindered by distance? It is a weakness of faith to measure success by means; and means by presence; and to tie effects to both, when we deal with an almighty agent. Finite causes work within their own sphere; all places are equally near, and all effects equally easy to the Infinite. O Saviour, while thou now sittest gloriously in heaven, thou dost no less impart thyself unto us, than if thou stoodst visibly by us, than if we stood locally by thee: no place can make any difference in thy ability and aid.

This was Mary's moan; no motion, no request sounded from her to her Saviour; her silent suit is returned with a mute answer; no notice is taken of her error. Oh that astonishing mercy which connives at our faulty infirmities! all the reply that I hear of, is a compassionate groan within himself. O blessed Jesu, thou that wert free from all sin, wouldst not be free even from strong affections: wisdom and holiness would want much work, if even vehement passions might not be cleared from offence. Mary wept, her tears drew tears from her friends, all their tears united drew groans from thee: even in thine heaven thou dost no less pity our sorrows; thy glory is free from groans, but abounds with compassion and mercy: if we be not sparing of our tears, thou canst not be insensible of our sorrows; how shall we imitate thee, if, like our looking glass, we do not answer tears, and weep with them that weep upon us?

Lord, thou knewest, when absent, that Lazarus was dead, and dost thou not know where he was buried? Surely, thou wert further off when thou sawedst, and reportedst his death, than thou wert from the grave thou inquiredst of. Thou that knewest all things, yet askedst what thou knowest, "Where have ye laid him?" Not out of need, but out of will: that, as in thy sorrow, so in thy question, thou mightest depress thyself in the opinion of the beholders for the time, that the glory of thy approaching miracle might be the greater, the less it was expected. It had been all one to thy omnipotence, to have made a new Lazarus out of nothing; or in that remoteness to have commanded Lazarus, wheresoever he was, to come forth; but thou wast neither willing to work a greater miracle than was requisite, nor yet unwilling to fix the minds of the people on the expectation of some marvellous thing that thou didst mean to work; and therefore askedst, "Where have you laid him?"

They are not more glad of the question, than ready for the answer; "Come and see." It was the manner of the Jews, as likewise of the Egyptians, among whom they had sojourned, to lay up the dead bodies of their friends with great respect; more cost was

sometimes bestowed on some of their graves, than on their houses: as neither ashamed then, nor unwilling to shew the decency of their sepulchre, they say, "Come and see:" more was hoped for from Christ than a mere view; they meant, and expected that his eye should draw him on to some further action. O Saviour, while we desire our spiritual raising from death, how should we lay open our deadness before thee; and confess to thee our impotence and senselessness! as, "Come, Lord, and see what a miserable carcass I am; and by the power of thy mercy raise me from the state of my corruption."

Never was our Saviour more submissively dejected than now, immediately before he would approve and exalt the majesty of his Godhead. To his groans, and inward grief, he adds his tears; presently, they shall confess him to be a God; whom these expressions of passions evince to be a man. The Jews construe this well; "See how he loved him!" Never did any thing but love fetch tears from Christ; but they do foully misconstrue Christ in their other captious question; "Could not he that opened the eyes of him that was born blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" Yes, know ye, O vain and unreasonable querists, that he could have done it with ease. To open the eyes of a man born blind, was more than to keep a sick man from dying; this were but to uphold and maintain nature from decaying; that were to create a new sense, and to restore a deficiency in nature; to make an eye, was not less difficult than to make a man; he that could do the greater, might well have done the less. Ye shall soon see this was not for want of power. Had ye said, Why would he not? why did he not? the question had been fair, and the answer no less easy; For his own greater glory. Little do ye know the drift either of God's acts or delays; and ye know as much as ye deserve: let it suffice for you to understand, that he who can do all things, will do that which shall be most for his own honour.

It is not improbable that Jesus, who before groaned in himself, for compassion of their tears, now groaned for their unbelief. Nothing could so much afflict the Saviour of men, as the sins of men; could their external wrongs to his body have been separated from offence against his divine person, their scornful indignities had not so much affected him: no injury goes so deep as our spiritual provocations against God. Wretched men! why should we grieve the good Spirit of God in us? why should we make him groan for us, that died to redeem us?

With these groans, O Saviour, thou camest to the grave of Lazarus. The door of that house of death was strong and impenetrable: thy first word was, "Take away the stone." Oh weak beginning of a mighty miracle! If thou meantest to raise the dead, how much more easy had it been for thee to remove the grave-stone? One grain of faith in thy very disciples was enough to remove mountains; and dost thou say, "Take away the stone?" I presume, there was a greater weight lay upon the body of Lazarus, than the stone of his tomb; the weight of death and corruption; a thousand rocks and hills were not so heavy a load as this alone: why then dost thou stick at this shovel-full? Yea, how easy had it been for thee to have brought up the body of Lazarus through the stone, by causing that marble to give way by a sudden refraction! But thou thoughtest best rather to make use of their hands; probably for their own more full conviction; for had the stone been taken away by thy followers, and Lazarus thereupon walked forth; this might have appeared to thy malignant enemies, to have been a secret contrivance betwixt thee, thy disciples, and Lazarus: or was it for the exercise of our faith, that thou mightest teach us to trust thee under contrary appearances? Thy command to remove the stone, seemed to argue an impotence; but instantly that seeming weakness breaks forth into an act of omnipotent power. The homeliest appearances of thy human infirmity are ever seconded with some mighty proofs of thy Godhead; and thy miracle is so much more wondered at, by how much it was less expected.

It was ever thy just will that we should do what we may: to remove the stone, or untie the napkin, was in their power; this they must do: to raise the dead was out of their power; this therefore thou wilt do alone; our hands must do their utmost, before thou wilt put to thine.

O Saviour, we are all dead and buried in the grave of our sinful nature. The stone of obstinacy must be taken away from our hearts, before we can hear thy reviving voice; we can no more remove this stone than dead Lazarus could remove his; we can, indeed, add more weight to our graves. Oh let thy faithful agents, by the power of thy law, and the grace of thy gospel, take off the stone, that thy voice may enter into the grave of miserable corruption!

Was it a modest kind of mannerliness in Martha, that she would not have Christ annoyed with the ill scent of that stale carcase? or was it out of distrust of reparation, since her brother had passed all the degrees of corruption, that she says, "Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days?" He that understood hearts, found somewhat amiss in that intimation; for his answer did not mean to rectify that which was utterly faultless. I fear the good woman meant to object this as a likely obstacle to any further purposes or proceedings of Christ. Weak faith is still apt to lay blocks of difficulties in the way of the great works of God.

Four days were enough to make any corpse offensive; death itself is not unfavoury; immediately upon dissolution the body retains the wonted sweetness; it is the continuance under death that is thus noisome. Neither is it otherwise in our spiritual condition: the longer we lie under our sin, the more rotten and corrupt we are; he who, upon the fresh commission of his sin, recovers himself by a speedy repentance, yields no ill scent to the nostrils of the Almighty: the candle that is presently blown in again, offends not; it is the snuff, which continues choaked with its own moisture, that sends up unwholesome and odious fumes. O Saviour, though thou wouldst yield to death, thou wouldst not yield to corruption; before the fourth day thou didst rise again: I cannot but receive many deadly foils; but Oh, do thou raise me up again, before I pass the degrees of rottenness in my trespasses and sins!

They who laid their hands to the stone, doubtless held now still awhile, and looked one while on Christ, another while upon Martha, to hear what issue of resolution would follow upon so important an objection; when they find a light touch of blame to Martha: "Said I not to thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" That holy woman had before professed her belief, as Christ had professed his great intentions; both were now forgotten; and now our Saviour is constrained to revive both her memory and faith; "Said not I to thee?" The best of saints are subject to fits of unbelief and forgetfulness; the only remedy whereof must be the inculcation of God's merciful promises for their relief, and support. O God, if thou hast said it, I dare believe, I dare cast my soul upon the belief of every word of thine; "Faithful art thou which hast promised, who wilt also do it."

In spite of all the unjust discouragements of nature, we must obey Christ's command: Whatever Martha suggests, they remove the stone, and may now see and smell him dead, whom they shall soon see revived. The scent of the corpse is not so unpleasing to them, as the perfume of their obedience is sweet to Christ; and now, when all impediments are removed, and all hearts ready for the work, our Saviour proceeds to the miracle.

His eyes begin; they are lifted up to heaven; it was the malicious and vile suggestion of his enemies, that he looked down to Beelzebub: the beholders shall see whence he expects and derives his power; and shall by him learn whence to expect and hope for all success. The heart and the eye must go together; he that would have nought to do with God, must be sequestered, and lifted up from earth.

His tongue seconds his eye; "Father." Nothing more stuck in the stomach of the Jews than that Christ called himself the Son of God; this was imputed to him for a blasphemy, worthy of stoning. How seasonably is this word spoken in the hearing of those Jews, in whose sight he will be soon approved so to be! How can ye now, O ye cavillers, except to that title, which ye shall see irrefragably justified? Well may he call God Father, that can raise the dead out of the grave: in vain will ye snarl at the style, when ye are convinced of the effect.

I hear of no prayer, but a thanksgiving for hearing. While thou saidst nothing, O Saviour, how doth thy Father hear thee? Was it not with thy Father and thee, as it was with

with thee and Moses? Thou saidst, "Let me alone, Moses," when he spake not. Thy will was thy prayer; words express our hearts to men; thoughts express them to God. Well didst thou know, out of the self-famefulness of thy will with thy Father's, that if thou didst but think in thine heart that Lazarus should rise, he was now raised. It was not for thee to pray vocally and audibly, lest those captious hearers should say thou didst all by intreaty, nothing by power: thy thanks overtake thy desires; ours require time and distance, our thanks arise from the echo of our prayers, resounding from heaven to our hearts; thou, because thou art at once in earth and heaven; and knowest the grant to be of equal pace with the request, most justly thankest in praying.

Now ye cavilling Jews are thinking, Is there such a distance betwixt the Father and the Son? Is it so extraordinary a thing for the Son to be heard, that he pours out his thanks for it, as a blessing unusual? Do ye not now see that he who made your heart, knows it; and anticipates your fond thoughts, with the same breath, "I knew that thou hearest me always; but I said this for their sakes, that they might believe."

Merciful Saviour, how can we enough admire thy goodness, who makest our belief the scope and drift of thy doctrine and actions! Alas, what wert thou the better, if they believed thee sent from God? What wert thou the worse, if they believed it not? Thy perfection and glory stands not upon the slippery terms of our approbation or dislike; but is real in thyself, and that infinite, without possibility of increase or diminution from us: we, we only are they that have either the gain or the loss in thy approval or rejection; yet so dost thou affect our belief, as if it were more thine advantage than ours.

O Saviour, while thou spakest to thy Father, thou liftedst up thine eyes; now thou art to speak to dead Lazarus, thou liftedst up thy voice, and criedst aloud, "Lazarus, come forth!" Was it that the strength of the voice might answer to the strength of the affection? since we faintly require what we wish not to obtain, and vehemently utter what we earnestly desire. Was it that the greatness of the voice might answer to the greatness of the work? Was it that the hearers might be witnesses of what words were used in so miraculous an act; no magical incantations, but authoritative and divine commands? Was it to signify that Lazarus's soul was called from far; and that the speech must be loud that shall be heard in another world? Was it in relation to the estate of the body of Lazarus, whom thou hadst reported to sleep? since those that are in a deep and dead sleep cannot be awaked, without a loud call: or, was it in a representation of that loud voice of the last trumpet, which shall sound into all graves, and raise all flesh from their dust?

Even so still, Lord, when thou wouldst raise a soul from the death of sin, and grave of corruption, no easy voice will serve. Thy strongest commands, thy loudest denunciations of judgments, the shrillest and sweetest promulgations of thy mercies, are but enough.

How familiar a word is this, "Lazarus, come forth!" no other than he was wont to use while they lived together; neither doth he say, 'Lazarus, revive,' but, as if he supposed him already living, "Lazarus, come forth!" To let them know, that they who are dead to us, are to and with him alive; yea, in a more intire and sensible society than while they carried their clay about them. Why do I fear that separation, which shall more unite me to my Saviour?

Neither was the word more familiar than commanding, "Lazarus, come forth!" Here is no suit to his Father: no adjuration to the deceased; but a plain and absolute injunction, "Come forth!" O Saviour, that is the voice which I shall once hear sounding into the bottom of my grave, and raising me up out of my dust; that is the voice which will pierce the rocks, and divide the mountains, and fetch up the dead out of the lowest deeps. Thy word made all, thy word shall restore all. Hence all ye diffident fears, he whom I trust is omnipotent.

It was the Jewish fashion to wrap up the corpse in linen; to tie the hands and feet, and to cover the face of the dead. The fall of man (besides weakness) brought shame upon him; ever since, even while he lives, the whole body is covered; but the face, because some sparks of that extinct majesty remain there, is wont to be left open. In death

(all



The RAISING of LAZARUS.



(all those poor remainders being gone, leaving deformity and ghastliness in the room of them), the face is covered also.

There lies Lazarus bound in double fetters; one almighty word hath loosed both; and now, he that was bound came forth; he whose power could not be hindered by the chains of death, cannot be hindered by linen bonds: He that gave life, gave motion, gave direction; He that guided the soul of Lazarus into the body, guided the body of Lazarus without his eyes, moved the feet without the full liberty of his regular paces; no doubt the same power slackened those swathing bands of death, that the feet might have some little scope to move, though not with that freedom which followed afterwards. Thou didst not only, O Saviour, raise the body of Lazarus, but the faith of the beholders. They cannot deny that he had been dead, whom they saw rising; they see the signs of death, with the proofs of life: those very swathes confirmed him to be the man that was raised; thy lesser miracle confirms the greater; both confirm the faith of the beholders. O clear and irrefragable example of our resurrection! Say now, ye shameless Sadducees, with what face can ye deny the resurrection of the body, when ye see Lazarus, after four days' death, rising up out of his grave? and if Lazarus did thus start up, at the bleating of this Lamb of God, that was now every day preparing for the slaughter-house; how shall the dead be roused up out of their graves, by the roaring of that glorious and immortal Lion, whose voice shall shake the powers of heaven, and move the very foundations of the earth!

With what strange amazedness do we think that Martha and Mary, the Jews and disciples, looked to see Lazarus come forth in his winding-sheet, shackled with his linen fetters, and walk towards them? Doubtless, fear and horror strove in them, which should be for the time most predominant: we love our friends dearly; but to see them again after their known death, and that in the very robes of the grave, must needs set up the hair in a kind of uncouth rigour, making it, as it were, stand an end. And now, though it had been most easy for him that brake the adamantine fetters of death, to have broken in pieces those linen ligaments wherewith his raised Lazarus was incumbered; yet he will not do it but by their hands: he that said, "Remove the stone," said, "Loose Lazarus;" he will not have us expect his immediate help in what we can do for ourselves. It is both a laziness and a presumptuous tempting of God, to look for an extraordinary and supernatural help from Him, where he hath furnished us with common aid.

What strange salutations do we think there were betwixt Lazarus and Christ that had raised him! betwixt Lazarus and his sisters and neighbours and friends! what amazed looks! what unusual compliments! for, Lazarus was himself at once; here was no interval of degrees to bring him to his wonted perfection; neither did he stay to rub his eyes, and stretch his benumbed limbs; nor take time to put off that dead sleep wherewith he had been seized; but instantly he is both alive and fresh and vigorous; if they do but let him go, he walks as if he had ailed nothing, and receives and gives mutual gratulations; I leave them entertaining each other with joyful embraces, with discourses of reciprocal admiration, with praises and adorations of that God and Saviour that had so miraculously fetched him into life.

It pleased not the Spirit of God to record how this wonderful miracle affected Lazarus and his sisters. Only we may gather from their piety, that they were very thankful. But it wrought different effects in the Jews, who were there present: for many hereupon believed on him; but others, persisting in their unbelief, went to the Pharisees, and acquainted them therewith, ver. 45, 46.

The chief priests* and Pharisees, upon this information, convene in council, and consult upon the matter. It was apparent Christ did many miracles; and if he were let alone,

* Not only the High Priest and his deputy are called chief priests, but possibly all those that had borne that office in those corrupt times, wherein it was exposed to sale; and the high priesthood, which was to be of the family of Aaron, and so to continue during life, was usurped by those who could procure it, and these were put in and out at the will of the Roman Governor, and changed yearly or seldomer, as they pleased. Under that title also may be comprehended the heads of the twenty-four orders of priests instituted by David, 1 Chron. xxiv.

they saw he would draw the people after him, and they would be ready to cry him up for the Messiah, and so the King of the Jews, and hereby they would in all likelihood incense the Romans, and draw them upon them, to the destruction of their temple and nation. Caiaphas, being the high priest that year, very imperiously delivers his opinion for the preventing this danger. "You (saith he) know nothing at all, neither consider that it is expedient one man should die for the people, that the nation perish not:" as if he should have said, 'You are weak and unskilful politicians, to boggle at such a case as this, and to debate thus long upon a matter of so easy resolution: for right or wrong the public safety must be provided for: and it is a great folly to prefer one man's life (how innocent soever) before a nation's welfare.' In which wicked speech, though Caiaphas did, by God's appointment, prophetically foretell that great good which should by our Saviour's death redound to the world; yet as to his own intention he meant no more, in all probability, than a justifying of that accursed maxim, Rom. iii. 8. that "we may do evil, that good may come thereof." And therefore in that wicked counsel, as the evangelist observes, God over-ruled his tongue, to bring out an oracle concerning his purpose "to save his people by the death of his Son," and that the fruits and benefits of his death should not only extend to the Jews, but to the Gentiles also; and that he should gather together into one body, or church, all that truly believe in him, though far and wide dispersed upon the face of the earth. The rulers, agreeing to Caiaphas's opinion, begin to plot and contrive how to get it executed, giving order to the people (especially the inhabitants of Jerusalem), that if any man knew where he was, they should give notice, that they might take him, and put him to death, John xi. 57. Which our Saviour understanding, to avoid their fury, for the present, withdrew himself privately to Ephraim, where he continued with his disciples, till the time was come, wherein he was called to expose himself.

The Jewish passover being now nigh at hand, many went up out of the country to Jerusalem, before the feast, that they might purify themselves, namely, such whom it behoved, by reason of some special pollution, or vow, to offer sacrifices, according to the law set down (Levit. ch. iv. ch. v. ch. vi. and ch. xiv. and i. ver. 1—16.) which could be only offered at the temple. These being come thither, begin to inquire for him, doubting whether he would come to the feast, or no.

Six days* before the passover Jesus comes to Bethany, and on the sabbath-day at night is entertained at supper in the house of Simon the Leper, where Martha serves, but Lazarus sat at table with him. Here Mary the sister of Lazarus, who had before shewed herself so forward to hear Christ's doctrine, Luke x. 39. took a pound of the richest nard, a very costly ointment, and, wiping his feet with her hair, anointed them therewith, and then brake the box over his head, and poured out all that remained upon him, so that the whole house was filled with the odour of the ointment. This she did out of her intire love to him, and in a way of honouring him, after the custom of those eastern countries, who used sometimes, at their feasts and banquets, to pour out precious perfumed ointments on the heads of those whom they much honoured and respected, that by the sweet and fragrant smell thereof, they might cheer up and refresh the spirits of their guests. This may be gathered from that speech of David unto God, Ps. xxiii. 5. "Thou preparest a table for me," &c. "Thou anointest my head with oil," &c. Judas,

* Matthew, ch. xxvi. and Mark, ch. xiv. relate this story as acted only two days before the passover. But from John xii. 1. it is apparent it was six days before that feast. So that Matthew and Mark, in setting down this story immediately after the relation of the chief priests' and scribes' conspiracy against Christ, which was indeed but two days before the passover (understanding thereby their second council concerning the taking and apprehending of Christ) use the figure hysteresis, setting down that afterward, which was done before. And the occasion of their so doing seems to be, that this relation might make way for the story of Judas's betraying him, that it might appear what moved or gave occasion to him to betray his Master, namely, 1. Our Saviour's open reproving him for taking exception against Mary's charitable work. 2. That he might redeem and repair the loss of that money which he missed by Mary's pouring the precious ointment on our Saviour, and not selling it.

and it seems some other of the apostles also, deluded by his specious pretence, take exception against Mary for this, and blame her for so needless a prodigality, alleging, that this box of ointment might have been sold for three hundred pence (which reckoning the Roman penny at seven pence half-penny, makes of our money nine pounds seven shillings and six pence), and given to the poor. This Judas spake not out of any true care for the poor, but that bearing the bag, and being a thief (who either had already purloined and converted some of the money which was in his keeping to his private use, or had purposed so to do, and to forsake his Master), he was vexed he had lost such a prize. Our Saviour hereupon defends and justifies Mary for this work of love she had performed to him, and shews that it was more needful both for her and them, for the present, to manifest their love and respect to him by such duties as she had now performed, than to take care of the poor: for the poor they should always have among them, and might have occasions enough to be charitable to them: but this opportunity of honouring him, would not always last, seeing his departure from them was at hand. He further commends her zealous affection manifested to him herein, "in that she had done what she could;" intimating, that if she had known of any better way or means to testify how highly she loved and honoured him at this time, she would have used it. He also declares, that he was pleased to accept and esteem of it, as a preparation to his funeral now at hand, and as an anticipation of the embalming of his body, it being the custom of the Jews to anoint the dead bodies of their deceased friends with sweet and precious ointments [see John xix. 40. and Luke xxiii. 56.] Lastly, He tells them, that wherever the Gospel shall be preached throughout the world, this fact of hers shall be published and made mention of to her special praise and commendation.

It being now known, that Jesus was at Bethany, many Jews resorted thither, not only for his sake, but also out of curiosity to see and speak with Lazarus, so lately raised to life again, and possibly to inquire somewhat of him concerning the state of the dead, and of the other life. Hereupon the rulers consult to put Lazarus to death also, seeing the miracle of his resurrection was a means to draw many to believe in Christ.

On the next morning, being the first day of the week (five days before his passion) Christ sets out with his disciples for Jerusalem. And when they were come to a place between Bethany and Bethphage in the Mount of Olives, he sends two of them (probably Peter and John) to a village over against them, telling them, they should find there, at the meeting of two ways, an ass tied with her colt or foal, which was never before ridden, and bids them bring them both to him: and if the owner should interrupt them, they should tell him their Lord and Master had need of them, and he would presently let them go. And in this he shewed his divine power upon the hearts and wills of men.

The disciples did as he commanded them, and brought them both to him, that he might chuse which he would ride upon; and casting their garments on them (that he might ride in a more honourable and decent manner), they set him upon the colt, which was led together with its dam. Matthew says, he sat upon an ass and a colt, ch. xxi. 5. The other three evangelists make mention only of the colt brought and sat on. He rode upon them both successively and by turns, says Tolet and others; which opinion they think the words of the prophet, Zach. ix. 9. do favour. *Vid. etiam Scalig. Annot. in John xii. 15.*

He now rides in this solemn and triumphant manner towards the city, that he might fulfil the prophecy in Zach. ix. 9. "Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy king cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass," &c. As also that he might shew some evident token and manifestation of his divine glory, and kingly office, which, as Mediator, he was to exercise over his church, ruling and reigning over it by the power of his word and holy spirit, for their spiritual good and salvation, Ps. ii. 6. "I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion," &c. Luke i. 33. "He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Whilst these things were doing, many of the people spread their garments in the way for him to ride upon, thereby acknowledging him to be their king; for this kind of honour was used to be done to kings and princes,

princes, namely, for men to cast their garments on the ground for them to ride or go upon. Others cut down branches of trees, and strewed them in the way, which was another testimony of the royal honour they performed unto him. And those that went before, and those that followed after in a joyful or triumphant gratulation to him, the Messiah and king of the church, cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David" (that is, Save this king, we pray thee, and prosper him). This word Hosanna, together with the words immediately following, are taken out of Ps. cxviii. ver. 25. where the people, upon the day of David's inauguration and installment, used those acclamations and wishes of all manner of prosperity upon him who was the type of the Messiah. They further add, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord;" that is, with power and authority from God. And "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David;" that is, Let the kingdom of the Messiah, that was peculiarly promised to our father David, and in which he succeeds David, and which is now revealed and manifested with power and authority from God, be happy and prosperous! And the better to express their zeal and earnestness in this acclamation, and to congratulate his coming with greater joy and thankfulness, they repeat this word Hosanna, again directing their prayer for the safety and prosperity of their king and his kingdom, O God, who dwellest in the highest heavens! Yet his disciples understood not so well at present, what themselves and others were doing, till after the glorifying of Christ, when the Spirit was poured out, and then it was brought to their remembrance, that this had been fore-prophefied of him, and in consequence thereof had been performed unto him, John xii. 16.

When Jesus was come to the descent of the Mount of Olives, many out of Jerusalem, hearing that he was coming in this manner to the city, met him, with branches of palm-trees in their hands [see Rev. vii. 9.] And joining with those that before accompanied him, with joyful acclamations, acknowledged him for their Messiah and king, so long expected, and that he came in the name and by the authority of God. And then praising the Lord for all the mighty works which he had done, they add, "Let there be peace in Heaven," that is, let God be pacified to mankind, by the coming of this King, and let him be forever glorified in the highest heavens, for this wonderful mercy, Luke xix. 37, 38. But some of the Pharisees, who had mingled themselves in this company, hearing the people make such acclamations to him, spake to him to rebuke them for it, and silence them, lest such acknowledgements and gratulations made to him as to a king, might be ill interpreted by the Romans, and so might bring great mischiefs on the people of the Jews, and on himself also. But he answers, that "if these should hold their peace, the very stones would cry out;" as if he should have said, 'The thing they say is most true;' and if they should join with you to smother it, God would in some other, though unlikely way, have it proclaimed in spite of you.

Then drawing nigh to the city, and being in the view of it, he burst out into tears at the consideration of their obstinacy, and wilful rejecting the offers of grace made unto them, and of the dreadful things that would ensue thereupon, namely, the utter ruin and destruction of their city by the Romans, which he pathetically foretells and sets forth, Luke xix. 41, &c.

He now makes his entry into Jerusalem. The citizens ask, Who is it that rides in this triumphant manner, having so many attending him, and such acclamations of Hosanna made unto him? Some of the company told them, it was Jesus the Prophet of Nazareth, whom they had before acknowledged as a prophet, but now homaged as their King. But the Pharisees were horribly enraged to see the people thus flock after him, and make such acknowledgments unto him, John xii. 19.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS on CHRIST's Procession to the TEMPLE.

When the sages of the East brought the first news of the King of the Jews, Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and now, when the King of the Jews comes himself (though in so mean a way) there is a new commotion. The silence and obscurity of
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of Christ never troubles the world; he may be an underling, without any stir; but if he does but put forth himself ever so little, so as to bear the least sway amongst men, then their blood is up; the whole city is moved. Neither is it otherwise in the private œconomy of the soul: O Saviour, while thou dost, as it were, hide thyself, and lie still in the heart, and takest all our manners contentedly from us, we entertain thee with no other than a friendly welcome; but when thou beginnest to combat with our corruptions, and to exercise thy spiritual power, in subduing our vile affections, now, all is in a secret uproar, all the corners of the heart are moved.

However, doubtless this commotion was not so much calculated to produce tumult, as wonder. As when some strange sight presents itself, in a populous street, men run, and gaze, and throng, and inquire; the feet, the tongue, the eyes walk; one spectator draws on another; one aiks, and presses another; the noise increases with the concourse, each helps to stir up another's expectation; such also was this of Jerusalem.

What means this strangeness? Was not Jerusalem the spouse of Christ? Had he not chosen her out of all the earth? Had he not begotten many children of her, as the pledges of their love? How justly mayest thou now, O Saviour, complain with that mirror of patience, "My breath was grown strange to my own wife, though I intreated her for the children's sake of my own body." Even of thee is that fulfilled, which thy chosen vessel said of thy ministers; "Thou art made a gazing stock to the world, to angels, and to men."

As all the world was bound to thee for thine incarnation and residence upon the face of the earth; so especially Judæa, to whose limits thou confinedst thyself; and therein, above all the rest, three cities, Nazareth, Capernaum, Jerusalem, on whom thou bestowedst the most time, cost of preaching, and miraculous works; yet, in all three thou receivedst not only strange, but hostile entertainment. In Nazareth, they would have cast thee down headlong from the mount; in Capernaum, they would have bound thee; in Jerusalem, they crucified thee at last; and now are amazed at thy presence. Those places and persons which have the greatest helps and privileges afforded them, are not always the most answerable in the return of their thankfulness. Christ's being amongst us doth not make us happy. Every day may we hear him in our streets, and yet be as curious to seek him as the citizens of Jerusalem; "Who is this?"

Was it a question of applause, or of contempt, or of ignorance? Applause of his abettors, contempt of the scribes and Pharisees, ignorance of the multitude? Surely, his abettors had not been moved at this sight; the scribes and Pharisees had rather envied, than contemned. The multitude doubtless inquired seriously, out of a desire of information. Not that the citizens of Jerusalem knew not Christ, who was so ordinary a guest, so noted a prophet amongst them; undoubtedly, this question was asked of that part of the train which went before this triumph, while our Saviour was not yet in sight, which soon after his presence resolved. It had been their duty to have known, to have attended Christ, yea, to have published him to others; but since this is not done, it is yet well that they spend their breath in an inquiry. No doubt there were many that would not leave their shop-board, and step to their doors or their windows to say, "Who is this?" as not thinking it could concern them who passed by, while they might sit still. Those Greeks were in some way too good, that could say to Philip, "We would see Jesus." O blessed Saviour, thou hast been so long amongst us, that it is our just shame if we know thee not; if we have been backward hitherto, let our zealous inquiry make amends for our neglect; let outward pomp and worldly glory draw the hearts and tongues of carnal men after them; but let it be my care and happiness to ask after nothing but thee.

The attending disciples could not be to seek for an answer; which of the prophets have not put it into their mouths? "Who is this?" Ask Moses, and he will tell you: "The seed of the woman, that will break the serpent's head." Ask our father Jacob, and he will tell you; "The Shiloh of the tribe of Judah." Ask David, and he will tell you; "The King of glory." Ask Isaiah, he will tell you; "Immanuel, Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace." Ask Jeremiah, and he will tell you, "The righteous Branch." Ask Daniel, he will tell you, "The Messiah." Ask John the

the Baptist, he will tell you, "The Lamb of God." If ye ask the God of the prophets, he hath told you, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" yea, if all these be too good for you to consult with; the devils themselves have been forced to say, "I know who thou art, even that holy One of God." On no side hath Christ left himself without a testimony; and accordingly the multitude here have their answer ready, "This is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth in Galilee."

Ye undervalue your master, O ye well-meaning followers of Christ: A prophet? yea, more than a prophet. John Baptist was so, yet was but the harbinger of this Messiah. This was that God, by whom the prophets were both sent and inspired. Of Nazareth? say you. Ye mistake him; Bethlehem was the place of his birth, the proof of his tribe, the evidence of his Messiahship; if Nazareth were honoured by his preaching, there was no reason that he should be dishonoured by Nazareth. No doubt, he whom you confessed, pardoned the error of your confession; ye spake but according to the common style. The two disciples, in their walk to Emmaus, after the death and resurrection of Christ, give him no other title. This belief passed current with the people; and thus high even the vulgar thoughts could then rise; and, no doubt, even thus much was for that time very acceptable to the Father of mercies. If we make profession of the truth, according to our knowledge, though there be much imperfection in our apprehension and delivery, the mercy of our good God takes it well; not judging us for what we have not, but accepting us for what we have. Shouldst thou, O God, stand strictly upon the punctual degrees of knowledge, how awfully would it go with millions of souls! for, besides much error in many, there is more ignorance; but herein do we justly magnify and adore thy goodness, that where thou findest diligent endeavour of better information, matched with an honest simplicity of heart, thou passest by our unwilling defects, and crownest our well-meant confessions.

But, Oh the wonderful hand of God in the carriage of this whole business! The people proclaimed Christ first a king; and now they proclaim him a prophet: Why did not the Roman bands run into arms, upon the one? Why did not the Scribes and Pharisees, and the envious priesthood, mutiny upon the other? They had made decrees against him, they had laid wait for him, yet now he passes in state through their streets, proclaimed both a king and prophet, without their opposition. What can we impute this to, but to the powerful and over-ruling arm of his Godhead? He that restrained the rage of Herod and his courtiers, upon the first news of a king born; now restrains all the opposite powers of Jerusalem from lifting up a finger against this last and public avowal of the regal and prophetic office of Christ. When flesh and blood have done their worst, they can be but such as he will make them. If the legions of hell combine with the potentates of the earth, they cannot go beyond the reach of their chain: whether they rise or sit still, they shall by an insensible ordination perform that will of the Almighty which they least think of, and most oppose.

With this humble pomp, and just acclamation, O Saviour, dost thou pass through the streets of Jerusalem to the temple. Thy first walk was not to Herod's palace, or to the market-places or exchanges of that populous city, but to the temple; whether it were out of duty, or out of need. As a good son, when he comes from far, first alights at his father's house; neither would he think it other than preposterous to visit strangers before his friends; or friends before his father; besides that the temple had more use of thy presence; there was the most disorder, and from thence, as from a corrupt spring, it issued forth into all the channels of Jerusalem. A wise physician inquires first into the state of the head, heart, liver, stomach, the vital and chief parts, before he asks after the petty symptoms of the meaner and less-important members. Surely all good or evil begins at the temple; and if God have there his own, men will find there nothing but wholesome instruction, holy example; the commonwealth cannot then want some happy tincture of piety, devotion, and godliness: as that fragrant perfume from Aaron's head sweetens his utmost skirts. On the other hand, the distempers of the temple cannot but affect the secular state: as therefore the good husbandman, when he sees the leaves grow yellow, and the branches unthriving, looks immediately to the root; so didst thou, O holy Saviour, on

on seeing the disorders spread over Jerufalem and Judæa, addrefs thyfelf to the rectifying of the temple.

No fooner is Chrift alighted at the gate of the outer court of his Father's houfe, than he falls to work: reformation was his errand; that he roundly attempts: that holy ground was profaned by facrilegious barterings: within the third court of that facred place was a public market held; here was a throng of buyers and fellers; though not of all commodities (the Jews were not fo irreligious), only of thofe things which were for the ufe of facrifice. The Ifraelites came many of them from far; from Dan to Beerfheba was no lefs than the fpace of an hundred and threescore miles: neither could it be without much inconvenience for them to bring their bullocks, fheep, goats, lambs, meal, oil, and fuch other holy provifion with them, up to Jerufalem. Order was taken by the priests, that thefe might, for money, be had clofe by the altar; to the eafe of the offerer, and the benefit of the feller, and perhaps no difprofit to themfelves. The pretence was fair, the practice unfufferable; the great Owner of the temple comes to vindicate the reputation and rights of his own houfe; and, in a ftrain of indignation at that fo foul abuse, lays fiercely about him; and with his thrice-ftringed fcourge whips out thofe facrilegious chapmen, cafts down their tables, throws away their baskets, fcatters their heaps, and fends away their customers with fmart and horror.

With what fear and aftonifhment did the repining offenders look upon fo unexpected a magistrate! while their confcience lashed them more than thofe cords, and the terror of that meek chaftifer more affrighted them than his blows! Is this that mild and gentle Saviour that came to take upon him our ftripes, and to undergo the chaftifements of our peace? Is this that quiet Lamb, which before his fhearers openeth not his mouth? See now how his eyes fparkle with holy anger, and dart forth beams of indignation in the faces of thefe guilty bankers and money-changers; fee how his hands deal ftrokes, and ruin! Yea, thus, thus it became thee, O thou gracious Redeemer of men, to let the world fee thou haft not loft thy juftice in thy mercy; that there is not more lenity in thy forbearances than rigour in thy juft feverity: that thou canft thunder, as well as fhine.

This was not thy firft act of this kind; at the entrance of thy public work, thou didft fo begin, as thou now concludeft, with purging thine houfe. Once before, had thefe offenders been whipped out of that holy place, which now they dare again defile. Shame and fmart is not enough to reclaim obdurate offenders: gainful fins are not eafily checked, but lefs may be eafily mastered; thefe bold flies, where they are beaten off, will alight again. "He that is filthy, will be filthy ftill."

Often before this had our Saviour been in the temple, and had often feen the fame diforder; he doth not think fit to be always whipping; it was enough, thus twice, to admonifh and chaftife them, before their ruin; that God, who hates fin always, will not chide always; and ftrikes lefs frequently: but he would have thofe few ftrokes perpetual monitors; and if thofe prevail not, he fmites but once: it is his uniform courfe to ufe the whip; and if that fpeed not, then the fword.

There is a reverence due to God's houfe for the owner's fake, for the fervice fake; fecular and profane actions are not for that facred roof, much lefs uncivil and beaftly; what but holinefs can become that place which is the beauty of holinefs!

The faireft pretences cannot bear out a fin with God; never could there be more plaufible colours caft upon any act; the convenience, the neceffity of provifions for the facrifice; yet, through all thefe do the fiery eyes of our Saviour fee the foul covetoufnefs of the priests, the fraud of the money-changers, the intolerable abuse of the temple. Common eyes may be cheated with eafy pretexts; but he that looks through the heart at the face, juftly answers our apologies with fcourges.

None but the hand of public authority muft reform the abufes of the temple; if all be out of courfe there, no man is barred from sorrow; the grief may reach to all, the power of reformation only to thofe whom it concerns. It was but a juft question, though ill propounded to Mofes, Who made thee a judge or a ruler? We muft all imitate the zeal of our Saviour, we may not imitate his correction; if we ftrike uncalled, we are juftly ftricken.

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for our arrogance and presumption. A tumultuary remedy may prove a medicine worse than the disease.

But what shall I say of so sharp and imperious an act, from so meek an agent? Why did not the priests and Levites (whose this gain partly was) protect these money-changers, and make head against Christ? Why did not those multitudes of men stand upon their defence, and wrest the whip out of the hand of a seemingly-weak and unarmed Prophet? but, instead hereof, run away, like sheep from before him; not daring to abide his presence, though his hand had been still? Surely, had these men been so many armies, yea, so many legions of devils, when God will astonish and chase them, they cannot have power to stand and resist. How easy is it for him that made the heart, to put either terror or courage into it at pleasure! O Saviour, it was none of thy least miracles, that thou didst thus drive out a world of able offenders, in spite of their gain, and obstinate resolutions; their very profit had no power to stay them against thy frowns. Who hath resisted thy will? Men's hearts are not their own: they are, they must be such as their Maker will have them.

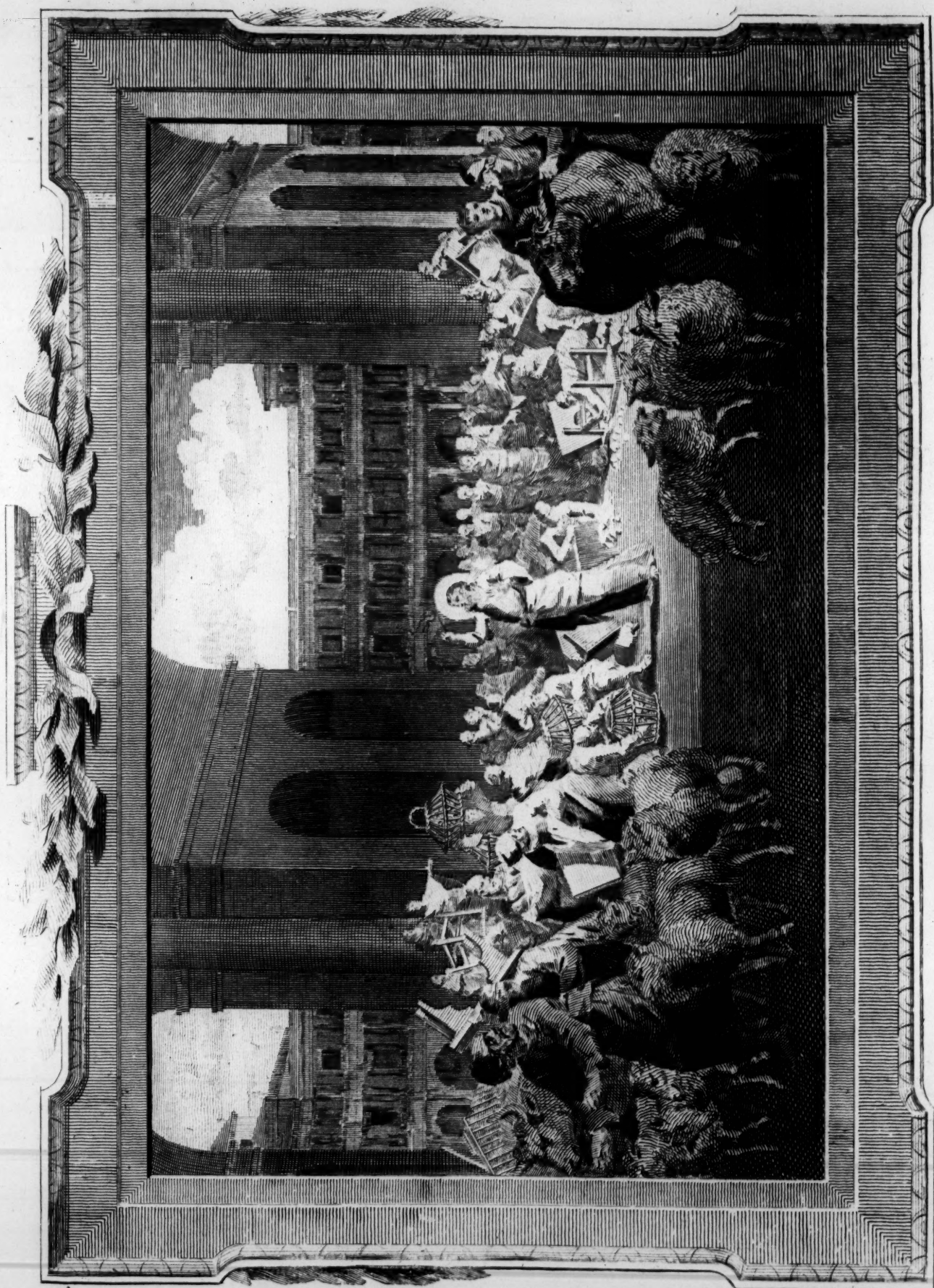
CHAPTER XII.

CHRIST ENTERS THE TEMPLE, AND PURGES IT. HE CURSES THE FIG-TREE. PARABLE I. OF THE TWO SONS. II. OF THE HOUSEHOLDER AND HIS VINEYARD. III. OF THE KING, WHO MADE A MARRIAGE FEAST. ENSNARING QUESTIONS OF THE PHARISEES, &c. ANSWERED. CHRIST ASSERTS HIS GODHEAD BEFORE THE PHARISEES. CAUTIONS AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS, THEIR CONDUCT AND DOCTRINES. EIGHT WOES DENOUNCED AGAINST THEM. THE POOR WIDOW'S LIBERALITY COMMENDED. CHRIST GIVES MANY PRESAGES OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE. HIS PREDICTIONS VERIFIED. EXHORTATIONS TO WATCHFULNESS AND PRAYER. PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS, AND OF THE TALENTS. JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET. HE IS BETRAYED BY JUDAS.

CHRIST, having entered the city, rode directly to the temple, and not to the palace, to shew that his kingdom was not a temporal, but a spiritual one, and that his power and authority did especially concern matters of the church; and therefore he went first to the place of God's worship, that he might there take notice what was amiss, and might reform it.

Being entered into the temple, that is, the outward court of it (for the inner court, and the holy, only the priests and Levites their ministers; and the Holy of Holies only the high-priest, and that but once a year, might enter into), he looked round about upon all things, to see what abuses and disorders were crept in; and, espying some that bought and sold sheep, oxen, and doves there, he drove them out thence, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of such as sold doves, as he had done before, John ii. 14. at the passover, in the first year of his public ministry*. This he did with extraordinary power and authority, so as none durst resist him, and with great zeal and indignation against these abuses. And that the temple might be kept from these and all other profanations, he would not suffer so much as a common vessel to be carried through it. Which actions of his he justifies by two places of scripture. 1. From Isa. lvi. 7. "Mine house shall be called" (that is, accounted and taken to be) "an house of prayer," viz. a special place appointed for my public and solemn worship (and prayer

* Some think our Saviour's purging the temple was not on this day, but on the day after; but Matthew (ch. xxi. 10, 11, 12.) so mentions this act of Christ, as if it were done on this day. And seeing he, at his first coming thither on this day, looked round about on all things, to take notice of the abuses there practised (Mark xi. 11.), it is not likely he would delay the reforming of those abuses, but would do it forthwith. Mark therefore so setting it down as done the day after, must be understood to speak by an *anastrophe* (usual in scripture), setting down that afterwards which was done before; the Evangelists being not always curious to express the circumstances of time when things were done, but content themselves sometimes only with setting down the things themselves *ex commodo argumenti nexu*, in such sort as is sufficient for the instruction of the church.



CHRIST cleareth the TEMPLE.



being one special part of divine worship, is named here, by a synecdoche, for all other parts of it), for all nations; that is, not for the Jews only, but for the Gentiles also, who will join themselves to me, and take upon them the observation of my law. For God had made a singular promise of his special presence in that place above all others, to hear the prayers, and accept all other religious services which his people should there perform unto him [2 Chron. vii. 15, 16. "Mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attend to the prayer that is made in this place—mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually."] And this he shews was the true end and use for which the temple was ordained. And though God hath not now confined his presence in the same manner to the public places of his worship, as he did to the temple in times of the Old Testament; yet he hath made a special promise of his gracious presence in all such places where his people assemble for his public worship [Mat. xviii. 20]. 2. From Jer. vii. 11. "Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?" These words he applies to those who bought and sold there, and enriched themselves by unlawful means (cheating and over-reaching the poor buyers), and sharply reproves them for such practices. 3. He heals the blind and the lame that were brought unto him, Mat. xxi. 14. 4. He justifies the children (who, having heard the elder sort cry Hosanna, made also the like acclamations to him), by way of reproof to the scribes and Pharisees (who were displeased at it), from that prediction of him, Ps. vii. 2. "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, or perfected praise." As though he had said, These children do not blaspheme, but God hath stirred them up to acknowledge me to be the Messiah, to the establishing of his strong praise and glory against all your contradictions. 5. He teaches in the temple, the people being very attentive to his doctrine; but the chief priests and scribes sought to destroy him.

Some Greeks, who, by the conversation of the Jews living among them, and reading of the Old Testament in the Greek tongue, had been brought to the knowledge of the true God of Israel, and, in imitation of them, came up at the solemn feasts to the worship at Jerusalem, being now there, hearing so much of the miracles wrought by Christ, especially the late wonderful one, of raising Lazarus, desire earnestly the favour to be admitted to his presence. They had heard how he was cried up for the Messiah expected by the Jews, who was to have (according to the common opinion then current) a temporal kingdom, and therefore (as may be probably gathered from Christ's reply) they thought to join themselves to him, and to insist themselves for his subjects. They propound the matter to Philip; and he acquaints Andrew therewith, and they both present their desire to Christ, John xii. 20, 21, 22.

Our Saviour admits them (as it is probable) into his presence; and that he might undeceive both them and his disciples (who dreamed too much still of a temporal kingdom), he begins a most divine sermon and discourse unto them of his approaching death and passion, which Augustine, *lib. 4. de Consensu Evangel. cap. 10.* calls *Excelsum Sermonem*; an admirable discourse.

He tells them, I. The time was drawing near when the Son of Man should be glorified, and the knowledge of him spread through the world. But he must first be rejected of the Jews, and be put to death: and should rise again and ascend to heaven, and send down his holy Spirit upon his apostles, and then (the generality of the Jews obstinately refusing him) his gospel should be preached to the Gentiles. And to arm them against the scandal of his sufferings, he shews the great benefits that would redound from his death, by a similitude taken from grain: for as when we sow corn, it seems lost, but proves our great advantage; so though the malice of men would put him to death, and think thereby to extinguish him, yet his death would produce many blessed fruits unto mankind, and not only to the Jews, but to the Gentiles also. If he did not die, he should remain only the eternal Son of God, and Heir of Heaven; but if he were put to death, he should rise again, and ascend to heaven, and give commission to his apostles to preach his gospel to all nations, and the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile should be pulled down, ver. 23, 24.

II. He intimates to them, that all who will be his disciples, must, by his example, prepare
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for sufferings, and not think their very life too dear to lay down for him (if he call them to it), and this was the surest way to secure to themselves eternal life. He shews that they who will be his servants, must be willing to follow his example, and tread in his steps; and, for their encouragement, he promises them they shall be received into that eternal glory into which he himself was entering [John xiv. 3. and xvii. 24.], and shall be highly honoured of his Father, ver. 25, 26.

III. Whilst he is thus preaching of his own death and sufferings, a natural horror of his approaching passion (though such as was without sin) seizes upon him; his Father giving him a taste of that wrath which was let out not against his person, but against the sins of men that were laid upon him. And hereupon he betakes himself to prayer in this manner, "Father, save me from this hour," his holy and sinless nature abhorring to lie under wrath; yet, as it were, recalling himself, he submits to what his office (as being our Surety) required of him; and prays again that God would so dispose of him, as might most conduce to the glorifying of his great name. And immediately there came a clap of thunder, and with it a voice from heaven, testifying that as the Father had glorified his name already in his life, so he would glorify it much more in his death, and by his resurrection, ascension, and that which should follow thereupon, ver. 27, 28.

Some of the standers-by heard the thunder with which the voice came; and others the voice itself, and said, that an angel spake to him. Christ tells them, that that voice came not for his sake only to comfort him, but to testify unto them that he was the true Messiah, and sent of the Father, and was his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased, that so they might be induced to believe in him, ver. 29, 30.

IV. Being now refreshed and comforted by his Father's voice from heaven, and having overcome the trouble and horror that seized upon him, he resumes the point he had been upon before (ver. 23, 24), and goes on to declare more fully the glorious fruits and effects of his death. He had said before, that corn cast into the ground, and there dying, brings forth abundant fruit: he goes on therefore to shew what fruit is to be expected from his death and passion. And the particular fruits he mentions, are, 1. The judgment of this world, and the casting out of Satan, the usurping prince thereof, ver. 31. that is, he declares, that now the cause of this world shall be judged: and whereas, by the fall of Adam, the world had been cast into confusion and disorder, man was fallen from his integrity and happiness, into sin and misery, whereupon Satan had reigned and raged in it; he would, by his death, take away this disorder, deliver the world from the tyranny and usurpation of Satan, and cast him out, and bring in everlasting righteousness, Dan. ix. 24. so that his death would be Satan's overthrow, and would spoil principalities and powers, Col. ii. 15. 2. The drawing of all men to him, when he is lifted up from the earth, by which he signifies his death on the cross, ver. 32, 33. And though all are not so effectually drawn as to come to him, and to believe in him; yet, by the preaching of the gospel, he calls and invites all unto him, offers the benefits of his death to all, even to the Gentiles, as well as the Jews.

The people hearing him declare that he must be lifted up on the cross, and so suffer an ignominious death, object against this, that then he could not be the Messiah, ver. 34, for the law (the whole scripture of the Old Testament in their sense, carrying that title, though elsewhere distinguished into the Law, Prophets, and Psalms, Luke xxiv. 44.) which their doctors used to interpret unto them, did, in some places of it, expressly say, That "Christ abideth for ever," as particularly Ps. cx. 4. Isa. ix. 6, 7. Dan. vii. 14. and therefore He, who called himself the Son of Man, and confessed he must die, could not be the Messiah. Their error and mistake in this objection was, their not considering and distinguishing the two natures in Christ's person, of both which (according to some) the scripture speaks, Isa. liii. 7, 8. so that he might be lifted up, and suffer in the one, and yet abide for ever in respect of the other. Likewise their confounding his state of humiliation unto death, which the scripture says he was first to undergo [Isa. liii. 8, 9. Dan. ix. 26. Ps. xvi. 10. xxii. 17, 18.] with his state of exaltation after his sufferings, in which respect he abideth for ever. So that Christ's suffering death, and yet abiding for ever, may very well consist together, if rightly understood.

Our Saviour gives no direct answer to this their cavilling objection, but points at what his former doctrine and miracles had plainly proved, namely, That he was the Messiah and light of the World [ch. viii. 12.] and that by his ministry and doctrine they had the true means of direction for attaining eternal life, and presses them to walk in the light, ver. 35. which he expounds to be their believing in him, and answerable walking, ver. 36. and that by so doing, they would evidence themselves to be children of light, and savingly illuminated by the Spirit of God. He tells them, they are likely to have this light but a little while among them, his person first, and then his gospel, being shortly to be removed from them; and therefore they had need improve the present opportunity, and not dispute themselves out of their own happiness; since, upon the removal of this light, the darkness of ignorance and misery would follow, and then they would wander like men in the dark.

V. The Evangelist shews, that notwithstanding all the pains Christ had taken in preaching to them, and the miracles he had wrought among them, yet the generality of them remained under blindness and unbelief; so that what Isaiah had prophesied long before in two several predictions, was fulfilled in them:

1. In chap. liii. 1. "Lord, who hath believed our report?" that is, our preaching (which the apostle, Rom. x. 16, applies to the unbelief of the Jews); and as Isaiah, and his fellow-prophets in his time, had cause to complain of the bad success of their preaching, so that complaint was a prediction of what success Christ, his apostles and ministers, should have in the days of the Gospel. "And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" that is, to whom hath the Gospel ("which is the power of God to salvation," Rom. i. 16.) been inwardly and effectually revealed (though many have outwardly heard it), so as to draw them to believe and embrace it? 2. The other prediction is in Isa. vi. 10. "He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts," &c. which, though it had its accomplishment in Isaiah's time, yet it belongs to the times of Christ, whose glory was seen and spoken of by the prophet in this chapter, as may appear from ver. 41. For he saw the glory of Christ, in the glory of the Father. Christ is said to blind their eyes, and harden their hearts, not of himself, but accidentally, because they were offended and hardened against him by seeing his low and mean condition in this world. And therefore, as they did wilfully shut their eyes against the light of the Gospel, and sinfully harden themselves, so he, by a judicial stroke, gave them up thereunto as a punishment, withholding his efficacious grace, and leaving them to themselves, and to the power of Satan, to harden and blind them more and more; inasmuch that they obstructed all passages whereby the word might enter and work conversion, which brings salvation and healing with it; and so they could not believe, being thus judicially blinded and hardened. John xii. 37 to 42.

VI. But though the generality of the Jews were thus hardened, yet there were several even among the chief rulers, that believed in him, though they durst not confess him openly, lest they should be put out of the synagogue, according to the decree mentioned John ix. 22. for they loved credit and applause among men, and in this particular preferred them to the approbation of God; which, where they bear full sway, is a shrewd sign of a graceless heart [ch. v. 44]; yet, prevailing here but in part, and manifesting itself only in one particular (namely, of non confession), doth not imply a total want of grace in them, but only proves the great weakness thereof, ver. 42, 43.

Lastly, Our Saviour, that he might stir up those who were for the present unbelievers, to believe in him; and the faint-hearted believers, to own and profess him; shews and declares, that the faith he calls them to, is not a faith in him as mere man, but as God also: and therefore if they were not ashamed to profess they believed in God the Father, they had no cause to be ashamed of believing in him; for he being true God, equal and one in essence with the Father, their believing in him was believing in God the Father also who sent him, ver. 44. Neither can any man see him spiritually and by faith, but he must see the Father also to be one with him in essence, though not in person, he being "the brightness of his glory, and the express Image of his person" [Heb. i. 3. Col. i. 15.] ver. 45. and he coming into the world to be the light thereof, and to enlighten sinners,

finners, they who believe in him shall partake of his light, that is, of his light of direction, refreshment, and consolation, and shall not walk in darkness, ver. 46. He further shews what a sad judgment awaits all unbelievers, and rejecters of him and his doctrine; for though, at his first coming, his errand was not to judge, but to dispense salvation and mercy to the world, yet he would judge them in the last day; when his word preached to them, and rejected by them, would be a sufficient testimony against them, ver. 47. and for this he adds a reason from the divine authority of his doctrine: for although his doctrine be his own, as he is true God, and the wisdom of the Father, yet it is not his own as mere man, nor as secluding the Father (who is one God with him), and who gave him his instructions and commission as mediator, which he had exactly followed. And he was assured that the doctrine he delivered by command from the Father, did point out the way to eternal life, and was the means of bringing lost sinners thereto, if they would believe and obey it; therefore they should consider, if they rejected it, whether they should not highly offend the Father, and bring upon themselves everlasting misery, ver. 49, 50.

Our Lord having thus spent the day, when it grew towards night he went out of the city with his apostles, to lodge at Bethany (probably at the house in which Lazarus, Martha, and Mary dwelt), that he might avoid the fury and malice of his enemies, who laid wait for his life; and to prevent them from practising any thing against him, before the due time appointed for his death was come: and, possibly, that he might be more free in that private place to give himself to prayer, either alone, or with his disciples.

On the morrow morning, returning from Bethany to Jerusalem with his disciples, and coming out fasting (as it is probable), in the way he began to be hungry, and espying a fig-tree afar off, that had leaves, he went to seek some fruit upon it. It seems there was in Judæa, besides the ordinary sort of fig-trees; some of an extraordinary nature, to which it was peculiar, that they had leaves all the year, and the figs they shot forth one summer were not ripe till the third summer after, so that usually their figs hung upon them three summers, and two winters, before their maturity; and that the tree in question was of this sort, seems probable from its having leaves at this time of the year, which it was not usual for the common fig-trees so soon to have, as may appear from Matt. xxiv. 32. Now of such a tree as this, Christ might well look for figs, but he could not expect any ripe ones, because "the time for them was not yet come," it being now but the eleventh of the first month Nisan, which answered partly to our March, and partly to April.

But coming to the tree, and perceiving it was barren, he took occasion from thence to represent the deplorable state of the obstinate Jews, who were incapable of producing the fruits of faith; and therefore, pointing to the tree, he pronounced upon it the curse of barrenness, and it immediately withered. "Now in the morning, as he returned into the city he hungered. And when he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came unto it, and found nothing thereon but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away! Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done." Matt. xxi. 18, &c.

This action was intirely emblematical, and intended to prefigure the speedy destruction of the Jewish nation, in consequence of their unfruitfulness in religion and truth, notwithstanding the advantages they enjoyed in the circumstance of our Saviour preaching to them the way of salvation.

After relating, nearly in the same words as St. Matthew, that our Lord found no fruit on the tree, St. Mark adds, "For the time of figs was not yet." It plainly appears then, that this was a species of fig-tree, which had leaves of a sufficient growth, to induce the expectation that it was not destitute of fruit; it is also evident, that this was a particular kind of tree, because it is distinguished by having leaves when other fig-trees had none, or only such as were small and tender; and that the former species abounded in

in the neighbourhoods of Bethphage, Bethany, and the Mount of Olives, we are assured upon indisputable authority.

Jesus approached the tree in expectation of finding fruit, a short time, probably four days, previous to the passover, or the time of his crucifixion; and this appears, from the connexion of the subsequent discourses and actions of our blessed Redeemer, as recorded in the gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark. The passover is well known to have been in the month of Nisan, or about the end of our March, or the beginning of April.

The tenderness of the branches, and the putting forth of the leaves of the ordinary fig-tree, are circumstances appealed to by our Saviour himself; and that soon after his pronouncing the curse of barrenness upon the tree in question, as natural indications of the approach of summer. It would therefore be absurd to suppose, that Jesus could expect to gather the common kind of figs at a season five months before their time of arriving at perfection.

It is clearly proved from the Talmudists cited by the learned Lightfoot, that the ordinary figs of Judæa did not arrive to perfection till five months after the middle of Nisan; and the same Jewish writers, exclusive of the common sort, describe various different species of figs; and they particularly mention one kind of tree, which bore leaves through all the seasons of the year, and was seldom destitute of fruit; and this tree was called Benoth-Shuach. According to these writers, the Benoth-Shuach produced figs every year; which, however, did not come to perfection till the third year; and it bore figs of three different sorts at one time; the fruit of the present year, and of the two years preceding. Other trees, they inform us, produced ripe fruit in two years; and therefore a part of it must have hung upon them during the winter. The tree, on which our Saviour expected to find fruit, must have been one of the two sorts above-mentioned, which bore ripe fruit through all the seasons.

Pliny and Theophrastus aver, that there are a sort of fig-trees in Syria and Greece, having leaves continually upon them, and bearing at once both old fruit and young. And the emperor Julian asserts, that there is a kind of fig-tree at Damascus in Syria, which bears both old and young fruit at the same time; and this famous apostate adds, that the uninterrupted succession of fruit on the same tree, mentioned in Homer's description of the garden of Alcinous, was verified in a fig-tree at Damascus.

Baumgarten assures us, that in December 1507, he found flowers and ripe fruits growing on the same trees in the neighbourhood of Jericho; and in January, abundance of ripe fruit at Baroot in Syria. And Tournefort says, that some sorts of figs grow in the Archipelago in winter, spring, and summer: but that the garden or ordinary figs are not ripe till the latter end of August, or the beginning of September.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS on the FIG-TREE cursed by CHRIST.

When, in the state abovementioned, our Saviour had rid through the streets of Jerusalem, that evening he lodged not there; whether he would not, that, after so public an acclamation of the people, he might avoid all suspicion of plots or popularity (for even unjust jealousies must be shunned, neither is there less wisdom in the prevention than in the remedy of evils), or, whether he could not, for want of an invitation; but Hosanna was better cheap, than an entertainment; and perhaps the envy of so stomached a reformation, discouraged his hosts: however, he goes that evening supperless out of Jerusalem. O unthankful citizens, do ye thus part with your no less meek than glorious King? His title was not more proclaimed in the streets, than your own ingratitude: if he have purged the temple, yet your hearts are foul. There is no wonder in men's unworthiness; there is more than wonder in thy mercy, O thou Saviour of men, that wouldst yet return thither, where thou wert so palpably disregarded! If they gave thee not thy supper, thou givest them their breakfast; if thou mayest not spend the night with them, thou wilt with them spend the day. O astonishing love to unthankful souls! not to be discouraged

by the most hateful indignities; by the basest repulses! What burden canst thou shrink under, who canst bear the weight of ingratitude!

Thou that givest food to all things living, art thyself hungry; Martha, Mary, and Lazarus kept not so poor a house, but that thou mightest have eaten something at Bethany; whether thine haste out-run thine appetite; or whether on purpose thou forbarest repast, to give opportunity to thine ensuing miracle, I neither ask, nor resolve. This was not the first time that thou wast hungry: as thou wouldst be a man, so thou wouldst suffer those infirmities that belong to humanity. Thou camest to be our High-priest; it was thy act and intention not only to intercede for thy people, but to transfer unto thyself, as their sins, so their weaknesses and complaints; thou knowest to pity what thou hast felt. Are we pinched with want? we endure but what thou didst, and we have reason to be patient; thou endurest what we do, we have reason to be thankful.

But what shall we say to this thine early hunger? The morning, as it privileged from excess, so from need; the stomach is not accustomed to rise with the body: surely, as thine occasions were, no season was exempted from thy want; thou hadst spent the day before in the holy labour of thy reformation work; after a supperless departure, thou spendest the night in prayer; no meal refreshed thy toil. What, can we think much to forbear a morsel, or to break a sleep for thee, who didst thus neglect thyself for us?

As if meat were no part of thy care, or as if any thing would serve to stop the mouth of hunger; thy breakfast is expected from the next tree. A fig-tree grew by the way-side, full grown, well spread, thick leaved; and such as might promise enough to a remote eye; thither thou camest to seek that, which thou foundest not; and not finding what thou soughtest, as displeased with thy disappointment, cursedst that plant which deluded thy hopes; thy breath instantly blasted that deceitful tree; and, as the whole world must needs do, it withered and died with thy curse.

O Saviour, I had rather wonder at thy actions, than discuss them. If I should say that, as man, thou either knewest not, or consideredst not of this fruitlessness, it could no way prejudice thy divine omniscience; this infirmity were no worse than thy weariness or hunger. It was no more disparagement to thee to grow in knowledge, than in stature; neither was it any more disgrace to thy perfect humanity, that thou, as man, knewest not all things at once, than that thou wert not in thy childhood at thy full growth. But herein I doubt not to say, it is more likely thou camest purposely to this tree; knowing the barrenness of it answerable to the season; and fore-resolving the event; that thou mightst hence ground the occasion of so instructive a miracle; like as thou knewest Lazarus was dying, was dead, yet wouldst not seem to take notice of his dissolution, that thou mightest the more glorify thy power in his revival: it was thy willing and determined disappointment for a greater purpose.

But why didst thou curse a poor tree for want of that fruit which the season yielded not? If it pleased thee to call for that which it could not give, the plant was innocent; and if innocent, why cursed? O Saviour, it is fitter for us to adore, than to examine; we may be too impertinent in inquiring after thee, and too fond in answering for thee.

If that season were not for ripe fruit, yet for some fruit it was; who knows not the nature of the fig-tree to be always bearing? that plant (if not altogether barren) yields a continual succession of increase; while one fig is ripe, another is green; the same bough can content both our taste and our hope; this tree was defective in both; yielding nothing but an empty shade to the disappointed traveller.

Besides that, I have learnt that thou, O Saviour, wert used not to speak only, but to work parables; and what was this other than a real parable of thine? All this while hadst thou been in the world; thou hadst given many proofs of thy mercy (the earth was full of thy goodness), none of thy judgments; now, immediately before thy passion, thou thoughtest fit to give this double demonstration of thy just austerity; how else should the world have seen thou canst be severe, as well as meek and merciful; and why mightest not thou, who madest all things, take liberty to destroy a plant for thine own glory? Wherefore serve thy best creatures, but for the praise of thy mercy and justice? What great matter was it, if thou, who once saidst, "Let the earth bring forth the herb yielding

yielding feed, and the tree yielding the fruit of its own kind;" shalt now say, "Let this fruitless tree wither!" All this yet was done in figure; in this act of thine, I see both an emblem and a prophecy. How didst thou herein mean to teach thy disciples, how much thou hatest an unfruitful profession; and what judgments thou didst mean to bring upon that barren generation? Once before hadst thou compared the Jewish nation to a fig-tree in the midst of thy vineyard; which, after three years' expectation and culture, yielding no fruit, was by thee, the owner, doomed to a speedy excision; now thou actest what thou then saidst. No tree abounds more with leaf and shade; no nation abounded more with ceremonial observances and semblance of piety. Outward profession, where there is want of inward truth and real practice, only serves to draw on and aggravate judgment. Had this fig-tree been utterly bare and leafless, it had perhaps escaped the curse. Hear this, ye vain hypocrites, that care only to appear well, never caring for the sincere truth of a conscientious obedience; your fair outside shall be sure to help you to a curse.

Our Lord, as we before observed, had all the innocent infirmities of human nature: and though it was "his meat and drink to do the will of his Father," yet his exhausted spirits were, of necessity, to be repaired by food. It is true, he might have appeased his appetite by the same miraculous means which he had repeatedly exerted for supplying the necessities of the multitude; but where human means could be had recourse to, it was his custom to reserve his miraculous powers for occasions of high importance.

The members of the Sanhedrim, having listened to the discourses of Jesus, became exceedingly alarmed, lest he should obtain such an ascendancy over the multitude, as would render it dangerous for them to oppose him; and therefore they assembled, in order to concert measures for effecting his destruction. Knowing the malignant and barbarous designs which the rulers of Jerusalem had projected, our Lord constantly retired from the city in the evening, lest under favour of the darkness of night he should be privately attacked by his enemies.

The day after Jesus had pronounced the curse of barrenness upon the fig-tree, as he was passing as usual towards Jerusalem, in order to instruct the people in the temple, the apostles observed, that the fig-tree was dried up: and Peter requested his Master to remark the circumstance. Hereupon Jesus said, that there was no cause for their expressing surprise that the tree had decayed at his command, since, provided they reposed a steady faith in the power and goodness of God, they would be able to effect more extraordinary miracles; for if they ordered Mount Olivet to remove into the sea, it would start from its foundations and obey their command; for the Almighty had graciously promised to comply with the petitions of those who strictly conformed to his divine pleasure. But our blessed Saviour recalled to their recollection, that if they hoped to obtain a remission of their sins from his heavenly Father, they must forgive those from whom they had sustained injuries; for without performing this just condition on their part, it would be fruitless to hope for pardon of their trespasses against the Almighty. "And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold the tree which thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering, saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand, praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any; that your Father also which is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive you your trespasses," Mark xi. 20, &c.

Jesus, being now come to the city again, goes directly to the temple, and teaches the people

people there, as he had done before. Immediately after he had done teaching, the chief priests and scribes came to him, and demanded of him, "By what authority he did these things?" He gives them no direct answer, but propounds another question to them concerning the baptism and ministry of John, asking them whether it were from heaven, or from men? And so entraps them in such a dilemma as they knew not how to get out of.

Then he spake unto them three parables.

I. Of the two Sons, who being commanded by their Father to go work in his vineyard; the first said, he would not go, but afterwards repented and went. The other said, he would go, but went not. Jesus asking them, which of these two did the will of his Father; and they answering, The first, he so applies the parable, as to liken them to the latter, shewing that the very publicans and harlots repented of their former disobedience against God, like the penitent son, and forsook their evil courses, and embraced the doctrine of the Gospel, and believed in him, the true Messiah; whilst they, notwithstanding all their fair professions of obedience to God, were like the other disobedient son, and continued still in their impenitency and unbelief. And though John Baptist had been among them, and had lived a holy and unblameable life, and had called them to repentance, and to believe in the Messiah now come, yet they believed him not. Nay, though they saw publicans and harlots believe his testimony, and to be wrought upon by his doctrine, yet they did not follow their example in repenting, and believing the Gospel, and so added rebellion to their infidelity, Matt. xxi. from 28 to 33.

II. Of a certain Householder or Master of a Family, who planted a vineyard, and bestowed much cost upon it, to make it fruitful and profitable to him; and let it out to husbandmen. Afterwards he sent his servants to those husbandmen, to require the fruits of his vineyard; but they were so far from yielding the fruit required, that they shamefully abused the messengers sent: at last he sent his only son and heir to them, expecting they would reverence his son; but him they killed and cast out of the vineyard. Our Saviour asks them, what the Lord of the vineyard, when he cometh, will do unto such wicked men? They answer, He will severely punish them, and destroy them, and let out the vineyard to others, who will render him the fruits of it. He approves their answer, and seconds it himself by repeating the substance of it, yet so as, by the manner of his speaking or gesture, he applies it to them, and plainly intimates that they were these wicked husbandmen who were thus to be punished. When they heard this, they cried out (as it is said, Luke xx. 16.) God forbid! shewing how much they abhorred to think that themselves were the guilty persons, or that they intended by their former answer to condemn themselves.—By the householder, in this parable, we are to understand God the Father; by his planting a vineyard, his establishing his church among the Jews, and furnishing it with all needful helps and means, to make it spiritually fruitful: by his letting it out to husbandmen, his committing the care of it to the public pastors and ministers thereof, who were by their ministerial pains to dress and keep it, that so it might bring forth spiritual fruits: by sending his servants, his sending the prophets, whom he extraordinarily raised up from Samuel's time to the coming of John Baptist, and sent to admonish priests and Levites, and all sorts of people, of their duties; reproving their sins, and warning them to repent: by his Son, Christ Jesus, whose person and message they ought reverently to have received. By the fruits that he expected, faith and obedience, which seeing they did not bring forth, but abused his prophets, and would put his Son to death also, therefore their ruin by the Romans is threatened, and the calling of the Gentiles in their room foretold, Matt. xxi. 43. And that our Saviour might further prove to them, what he had before intimated, that they were those wicked husbandmen spoken of in the parable, he alleges a place out of the Book of Psalms, in which the prophet foretold long before, how the Messiah (the chosen of God to be the King and Head of the Church) should be rejected and despised of men, and also of such as should be the chief pastors and rulers and governors of the church. The place is Ps. cxviii. 22, 23. "The stone which the builders rejected," &c. which words, though in the first sense spoken of David

David (who was rejected and refused by Saul and his adherents, but was chosen of God, and made king of Israel at length by God's special providence after a wonderful and extraordinary manner), yet they are also a prophecy of Christ (of whom David was a type), and had their accomplishment especially at Christ's resurrection from the dead, and ascension into heaven, at which times he was plainly "declared to be the Son of God," and true Messiah, and consequently the chief stone in the building of the church, that is, to be the chief part of the whole spiritual building, or chief and principal person in the church, who shall have the chief place and office therein (being the foundation and supporter of it); even as the chief corner stone hath in a material house or building, which is the chief stay of it, and upholds the chief weight of it, therefore called "the Head of the corner." He further adds, that "Whosoever shall fall on this stone," &c. that is, Whosoever shall out of ignorance be offended at him and his mean condition in this world, as men do fall on a stone in their way, they shall not hurt him, but themselves; but whosoever shall oppose him out of malice, and shall set themselves as adversaries against him, he will fall upon those men with his weight, and by his mighty power grind them to powder, and destroy them utterly, Mat. xxi. 44, 45.

The chief priests and Pharisees were much enraged that he had spoken this parable against them, yet they durst not at present lay hands on him, for fear of the people, who deservedly took him for a prophet.

III. Of a King, who made a magnificent Marriage-feast for his Son, &c. The scope of which parable is briefly this. By the kingdom of heaven, we are to understand God's government of his church, which is spiritual and heavenly, not an earthly government and dominion: by the king, God the Father: by his Son, Christ Jesus: by the marriage, the union of the divine and human natures in Christ: by the marriage-feast, the glorious benefits of Christ tendered in the preaching of the gospel, and gospel-ordinances: by his sending forth his servants, to invite them that were bidden to the wedding, is meant his sending John Baptist, the apostles, and seventy disciples, to call those who were formerly invited, that is, the Jews (who had been before certified and instructed concerning the coming of the Messiah by the promises of him made unto the fathers, and by the whole Levitical œconomy), to repent and believe in Christ now come and exhibited. By their refusing to come, is implied their refusing to own him, or believe in him as the true Messiah. By his sending forth other servants to give them another call, and tell them all things were ready, we may understand the apostles, evangelists, and other teachers of the gospel (such as Stephen, Paul, Barnabas, Apollos, and others that were sent after his passion, resurrection, and ascension), to declare that all things were now finished and accomplished by him that were prophesied of him, and which were necessary for man's redemption; and that he was ready to receive all truly penitent sinners, that would come unto him, and believe on him, to a participation of his benefits. Intreating his servants spitefully, denotes their imprisoning and scourging the apostles, Acts v. 40. xiv. 5, 19. and stoning Stephen, vii. 59. By the king's being wroth with these men, and sending out his armies to destroy them; is forebewn God's just indignation against the obdurate Jews, and sending forth the Romans (called his armies, because employed by him, Isa. x. 5.) to destroy Jerusalem, and burn both city and temple; at which destruction there perished eleven hundred thousand men, women, and children, as Josephus reports, Book VII. of the Wars of the Jews. By his sending his servants into the highways, his sending his apostles and ministers to preach to the Gentiles in all parts and countries of the world: and by their going and gathering as many as they could find, both bad and good, is signified their inviting, by the preaching of the gospel, all sorts without difference, high and low, rich and poor, profane and civil; which latter, compared to those that are notoriously vicious, may be counted good, though none are truly good before they are effectually called and converted. By the wedding being furnished, is meant, that the church was, by the preaching of the gospel, full of those who gave their names to Christ, though of these some were true believers, and some hypocrites. By the king's coming to see the guests, and observing one that had not on a wedding garment, is denoted God's coming to

to judge those who, under a Christian profession, had not on the wedding garment of a real faith, uniting them to Christ, and working by love, and exerting itself by sincere obedience, but (being hypocrites and dissemblers under the Christian name) dishonour Christ and his gospel by their unholy lives and conversations. By the king's commanding his servants to bind him hand and foot, and cast him into utter darkness, is imported, that the damned shall have no power to rest, nor possibility of flying from God's severe wrath, but shall be banished from the blessed presence of God, and thrown into hell, where shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. From the whole parable this is inferred, that "Many are called, but few chosen," that is, many that are called, do not come so far as to profess christianity, or to own Christ; but among them that do come so far, and profess to believe in him, many will be found false-hearted, and hypocritical professors, and for want of a true faith (which purifies the heart, and reforms the life) shall miss of salvation.

The Pharisees seeing their first question [By what authority he did those things?] did not succeed well, resolved to try him with another captious question. The Jews had been made tributary to the Romans by Pompey, but most of them very unwillingly paid that tribute, looking upon themselves as the peculiar people of God, and a free-born nation, John viii. 33. and such as ought not to be subject to a foreign power; which maxim they built upon Deut. xvii. 15. "One from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother." And hence came that sedition and tumult raised about that matter, Acts v. 37. by Judas of Galilee, which is also more fully recorded by Josephus, Antiq. lib. xviii. The Pharisees, therefore, taking occasion from this matter, that they might be sure to insnare him, send some of two contrary persuasions to him, namely, some of their own disciples and sect, who were against paying tribute* to the Roman emperor; and some of the Herodians†, who were for it; that so whatsoever answer he should make to the question they intended to propound to him, one party might be offended with him. If he answered in favour of the Pharisees, he might be accused of sedition against Cæsar: if in favour of the Herodians, he would offend the generality of the Jews (who with great regret paid the tribute), and would be looked upon as an enemy to his own nation, and a betrayer of their liberty. Having thus laid their design, the persons by them employed, feigning themselves just and upright-minded men, and pretending to desire a resolution from him in a case of con-

* Some interpreters are of opinion, that our Saviour's words do not determine Cæsar's right to demand tribute; but since the Jews had now submitted to the Roman government (as they had formerly done to the Assyrian), which national submission (with promise of fidelity) having now obtained about an hundred years, was a just ground for Cæsar's right; since, besides this, Cæsar had indulged them in the exercise of their religion, and the enjoyment of their civil rights; had fought their battles, and protected them against the common enemy, the Arabians and Parthians, and the like; since, more especially, it was a received maxim among the Jews, that wherever the money of any person was owned, as the current coin of the kingdom, there the inhabitants acknowledge that person to be their lord and governor; and since the Jews accepted and trafficked with Cæsar's money, and held it current in all their payments; our Saviour's answer, "Render therefore to Cæsar," which is founded upon their own principles, must needs be deemed a positive declaration of Cæsar's right to receive tribute, and such other acknowledgments as belonged to the state and dignity of the post wherein Providence had placed him. It might indeed be objected (says Grotius on Mat. xxii. 20.), that the Romans ruled over the Jews, and Cæsar over the Romans, in fact only, and without any right to do so; but Christ shews, that this objection signifies nothing to the matter in hand: for since peace cannot be secured without forces, nor forces had without pay, nor pay without taxes or tribute; it follows, that tribute ought to be paid to the person actually governing (so long as he continues to govern), in consideration of the common safety and protection which are secured by the present possessor of the government, whoever that possessor be.

† The Herodians are commonly, and most probably, supposed to signify the partisans and favourers of Herod; but what their principle was, as to the matter now in hand, is not so generally agreed. Some think them enemies to the Roman government, and that they only watched a favourable opportunity to make Herod's family absolute. Others think them intirely in the interest of the emperor, as Herod himself then was; for having, by his indulgence, been advanced to the regal state, he acted for, and under him, in collecting the customs and public dues. This opinion seems the more probable, because it is more agreeable to the Pharisees' present design: for had they sent persons all of one sentiment, Christ might have easily satisfied them all; but now, by sending men of different judgments, they made it impossible for him to content both parties, since in determining for the payment of the tribute, he must have given offence to the Pharisees, and in effect renounced those liberties and privileges which some of the Jewish doctors insisted upon; and, in pronouncing against it, he was sure to incur the Herodians' displeasure, and make himself obnoxious to the jurisdiction of the civil sword. The Herodians, therefore, may well be presumed to have been persons of a principle different from the Pharisees, whose address and cunning, upon this occasion, seems to have lain chiefly in the management of the messengers.

science, came to him, and, after a flattering and insinuating preface, asked him, Whether it were lawful for them to give tribute to Cæsar, or no? He, perceiving their craft, asked them why they did thus cunningly and hypocritically try and prove him, to the end they might insnare him? Then bidding them shew him the tribute-money (which was the Roman Denarius, answering to seven-pence half-penny of our money, two of which they paid by way of tribute), he asks, whose image and superscription it had? and they replying, Cæsar's; he bids them, "Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." They being astonished at this cautious answer, and silenced therewith, left him, and went their way.

Then the Sadducees set upon him, to tempt and try him by a subtle objection or argument (as they thought) which they had framed against the doctrine of the resurrection, that so they might confute and nonplus him before the people. They acquaint him, that a certain woman had seven brethren successively one after another for her husbands, according to the law of Moses, Deut. xxv. 5, 6.* Wherein it is enjoined, that the next brother, being yet unmarried, shall take his brother's widow to wife, in case he die without issue. And the case being thus, they ask him whose wife that woman should be in the resurrection? Christ admonishes them of their error, discovering to them a twofold cause of it. 1. Their ignorance of the scriptures: they were not so well acquainted with them, nor had so well read and studied them, as they ought to have done. 2. They did not conceive aright, nor understand and believe the greatness of God's power by which he shall raise the dead, else the resurrection would not seem so impossible to them. Then he confutes and overthrows the ground of their objection, by shewing them what shall be the state and condition of the saints, after the resurrection, and in the life to come (for though all sorts, both good and bad, shall rise from the dead, yet he speaks here principally of the resurrection of the saints, which will be a resurrection to glory, Luke xx. 35. whereas the ungodly shall rise to condemnation): then there shall be no use of marriage or the married state, for the saints shall be like the blessed angels, not in nature or essence, but in respect of that heavenly, immortal, and incorruptible life, which shall be given them, and in that they shall have no need of meat, drink, sleep, marriage, or any other earthly means to maintain and preserve it. And having thus confuted the ground of their argument, he now proves against them the truth of the resurrection by a testimony out of the Books of Moses, which they held for canonical, and divinely inspired, though they acknowledged not (as Origen thinks) the prophets for such. The testimony he alleges is, God's † speaking to Moses out of the flaming bush, Exod. iii. 2, 6. and saying, "I am the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob." Whence he inferreth, that if God was the God of these patriarchs, after they were dead (and yet is not the God of the dead, but of the living), then they are not so dead, but they shall and must of neces-

* Whereas it is said, Lev. xviii. 6. "None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him," that is, such near kindred as are afterwards particularly expressed. And ver. 16. "Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife;" whereby marrying of the brother's wife seems clearly forbidden. We are to understand, that the law alleged out of Deut. xxv. 5, 6. is a special exemption of that general law given in Lev. xviii. 16. which exemption was peculiarly given to the Israelites, and that for a time only, and for special reasons: for that law, of raising seed to the brother, was partly ceremonial, figuring the primogeniture of Christ; the first born sons being special types of Christ, who is called "the first born among many brethren," Rom. viii. 9. Therefore the name of the first born was to be continued and preserved to typify and shadow forth Christ's eternal birthright, and to the continuance of his name for ever; and was partly judicial, that the inheritance of the eldest brother might by that means descend to his brother's son (who was to be called by the name of the elder brother, and accounted his legal son), and so it tended to preserve the distinction of families and tribes among them, that so it might be known of what family and tribe Christ came. Now because the principal grounds of this law did concern the Jews only in the times of the Old Testament, it is now abrogated to us, and that other law before alleged out of Lev. xviii. 16. which forbids the marriage of the brother's wife as incestuous, is to be observed by all Christians to the end of the world.

† Whereas it is said, Exod. iii. 2. that it was an angel which appeared to him, it is not to be understood of a created angel, but of Christ the Son of God, who is called an Angel in that and other places of scripture, as may appear by comparing Exod. xxiii. 20. (where the Lord promiseth to send an angel before his people, to conduct them through the wilderness, and warns them not to provoke him, &c.) with 1 Cor. x. 9. where the apostle saith, it was Christ whom the Israelites tempted in the wilderness; who often appeared to Moses and others in the form and likeness of an angel, that is, by assuming to himself some visible shape for a time, as ordinary angels used to do. It is observed by divines, that whensoever, in the Old Testament, God sensibly appeared, it was the second person: and therefore he is called, Mal. iii. 1. "The Messenger, or Angel of God's Covenant."

sity live again; else God could not be said to be their God after they were dead. Therefore Luke says, ch. xx. 38. "They all live unto him," that is, not only in respect of their souls, which are immortal; but in respect of their bodies, because they shall be raised up again by him, and with God "future things are as already present," as the apostle speaks, Rom. iv. 17.—"God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not, as though they were." The sum is, God cannot be said to be the God of such as are finally and irrecoverably dead, in respect of their bodies, and without all possibility of living again; but of such as are dead only for a time, whom he will raise again to a new life; from which resurrection they are called the children of the resurrection, because they do not obtain this new life by generation, but by resurrection. Thus our Saviour proves to these Sadducees the doctrine of the resurrection, not by express words of scripture (as he could have done), but by necessary deduction and consequence from scripture, which argues that kind of proofs to be firm and sufficient to build faith upon. Having thus confuted the Sadducees, they durst ask him no more questions; and the scribes (who were their adversaries) commend him for thus confuting them, Luke xx. 29. And the people admired, and were astonished at his wisdom and doctrine.

Then a Pharisee, one of the doctors or expounders of the law, with a design to insnare him, or to hear what he would say, asked him, "Which is the greatest commandment in the law?" It seems it was much disputed among them at that time, Whether the precepts concerning sacrifices and oblations, or the moral precepts, were the greater. Our Saviour answers, that to acknowledge and worship the true God (who is one in nature and divine essence, though there are three distinct persons in the Godhead), and to "love him with all our heart and soul, mind and strength," that is, with all the faculties and powers of our whole man, with the greatest measure, and highest degree of love, we possibly can, is the general sum and substance, or abridgment of the four first commandments, which concern our duty towards God. This is the first and chief commandment of the law, or the sum of the first table. And "to love our neighbour as our self," that is, with such a true, right, and regular affection, as we ought to bear to ourselves, is next unto it, and like unto it in the greatness and weightiness of the matter commanded in it, and is the sum of the second table, containing our duty towards man. Now by our love to God, and to our neighbour, we are to understand the inward affection, as also all effects and duties of love flowing from the same. And these two virtually contain in them the whole moral law, and all the duties enjoined therein, the sum of all being love, according to that 1 Tim. i. 5. "The end of the commandment is love," &c. Yea further up on these two commandments of love to God, and love to man, the whole law and prophets are said to depend, Matt. xxii. 40. because the main scope and drift of the law and prophets is, especially, to urge duties of piety towards God, and of charity and justice towards man.

The Pharisee acknowledges and approves of the truth and soundness of our Saviour's answer, and repeats the sum and substance of it, together with a further declaration and confirmation of what he had asserted concerning both these commandments; and adds, that to observe these was more than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices, that is, than to perform all outward ceremonies, and external duties of God's worship; moral obedience being to be preferred before all those ritual performances which many place the main of religion in.

Our Saviour perceiving that he answered discreetly, and that he did not oppose himself against the truth, but willingly acknowledged and consented to it, and that he was well instructed in the law, and understood the main scope and end of it; which was a proper means to convince him of sin, and to shew him his inability to keep it perfectly; and consequently how impossible it was for him to be justified and saved by any works of his own, and thereupon to bring him to seek for salvation where only it is to be had [Rom. x. 4.]; tells him, He is "not far from the kingdom of God," that is, from acknowledging him for the true Messiah, and believing in him, and accepting of him, as his Saviour; which saving knowledge and faith in Christ is called the kingdom of God, because it is a special part of God's kingdom of grace, by which he reigns in the hearts of men, and is the

the way and means to bring them to the kingdom of glory, John xvii. 3. He tells him, therefore, he was in a good way to the true knowledge of the Messiah, and to faith in him, though he had not as yet attained to it. After this, none of the scribes or Pharisees (being thus silenced by him) durst ask him any more captious questions.

The Pharisees being drawn together about him, that he might confute their erroneous opinion touching the person of the Messiah (whom they thought should be a mere man of the stock and lineage of David only, and not the Son of God), and to strengthen the faith of his disciples there present, touching his Godhead, against the time they should see him suffer; he propounds this question to the scribes and Pharisees, "How Christ could be David's Son, whom David, inspired by the Spirit of God, calls Lord?" that is, how could he be the Son of David in that sense the scribes and Pharisees held him to be, viz. the son of David only, and so a mere man? The words of David are in Ps. cx. 1. "The Lord said unto my Lord," &c. which words contain in them a prophetic prediction of the exaltation and advancement of Christ the true Messiah, unto the glory of his kingdom, uttered by David in the person of God himself, calling and appointing his Son Jesus Christ to be thus advanced. "The Lord," that is, God the Father, "said to my Lord," that is, to his Son, who was to be incarnate, whom David calleth his Lord: 1. In respect of his Godhead, and so he was his Lord by right of creation. 2. As he was Mediator, and, by taking our nature, became God and Man in the same person; and so he was his Lord by right of redemption. And by this speaking of God the Father to Christ his Son, is meant nothing else, but that God the Father did, in his eternal purpose, appoint this concerning his Son Christ, and would in due time declare and manifest this his decree by executing the same, and by exalting his Son to the highest degree of heavenly glory in his kingdom next to himself, and to a full possession and administration of his kingdom and government over all the world, and especially over his church. Now this exaltation of Christ, which was here prophetically foretold by David, was afterwards fulfilled in the time appointed, that is, immediately after his resurrection and ascension to heaven: then, and not before, was he set at the right hand of God in that sense David here speaks of. Hence this exaltation of Christ was not by receiving any glory which, as God, he had not before, but only by a more clear and full manifestation of the glory of his Godhead in his human nature, after his ascension into heaven: and so we are to understand that place, Acts ii. 36. "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ:" that is, manifested him to be the Lord of heaven and earth, by revealing the glory of his Godhead, in his human nature, more clearly than ever it was before. And one special effect and consequent of his exaltation, will be the vanquishing and subduing his enemies: "For he must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet," 1 Cor. xv. 25. Yea and when that is done, when his enemies are wholly, utterly, and finally subdued (which will be at the last day), he shall possess and enjoy this glory for ever.

This long continuance and eternity of Christ's kingdom, and the glory of it, is set forth in sundry places of scripture, as Ps. xlv. 6. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," Dan. vii. 14. "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away," &c. Luke i. 33. "Of his kingdom there shall be no end," Heb. x. 12. "He sat down on the right-hand of God for ever" (for so the words, according to the original text, may be rendered): and whereas it is said, 1. Cor. xv. 24. "He shall at the last day deliver up the kingdom to God the Father," &c. that is to be understood not absolutely, but in respect of that particular manner of administering it, which he now uses, which shall then cease and be no more. For although now he governs his church by the ministry of his word and sacraments, and other outward means, then he shall govern it immediately by himself; and whereas now he reigns in the midst of his enemies, which rebel against him and his kingdom, then he shall reign without any enemies to oppose him. Therefore he is said to resign his kingdom to his Father, not absolutely, as if he should then cease to reign any longer, but only in respect of that particular manner of administering it, which was to continue only for the time of this present life. But to this question of our Saviour, How David could call the Messiah (who was to descend of him) his Lord, if he did not

believe he should be more than a mere man, even the Son of God, the Pharisees were not able to answer a word. However, the common people heard him with great delight, being much affected with his admirable doctrine and excellent manner of teaching.

Christ, seeing little hope of doing any good upon the Pharisees, now begins a severe denunciatory discourse or sermon to his disciples, and the multitude that followed him, against this sort of men, in order that they might be the better armed against their wickedness and hypocrisy: Wherein,

1. He exhorts his hearers, that they should follow the scribes and Pharisees in what they should rightly teach them out of Moses and the Prophets (they holding the place of doctors, and ordinary expositors of Moses's law, and succeeding to Moses in the ordinary office of teaching and governing the people, especially in those things that concerned the worship of God): he had indeed warned them before of their corrupt glosses and false doctrines (Matt. xvi. 6, 12. called the Leaven of the Pharisees): therefore here he enjoins them only to observe and follow them in what they taught consonant to the word of God, ver. 2, 3.

2. Though they were to follow their doctrine, so far as it was right and sound, yet he warns them to take heed of following their example, for they lived not according to their own prescriptions. Many severe ordinances they impose on others, over-and-above what the law requires, but dispense with their own observance of them, Matt. xxiii. ver. 3, 4.

3. He admonishes them to take heed of imitating them in their ambition and vain-glory, which they expressed, 1. In making broad their phylacteries, which were parchments in which the precepts of the law were written, which they bound to their arms or foreheads, that they might seem zealous observers of the law, pretending their warrant for it, from Deut. vi. 8. "Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." These they made broader than ordinary, that they might be more conspicuous, and better seen and taken notice of. And whereas God had commanded, Numb. xv. 38, 39, 40. that they should "make fringes in the borders of their garments, that by looking upon them, they might remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them," and might content themselves with what is limited and prescribed by the law, and be restrained from their own inventions, additions, and devices in his worship, and might be distinguished in their habit from strangers; and whereas all the Jews generally (according to this law) wore such garments with blue fringes; these Pharisees used long robes, with larger and broader fringes than others did, for a shew of greater sanctity, and that they might appear to men to be more eminently religious, ver. 5. 2. In their affecting, and ambitiously contending for the uppermost places in all conventions, as at feasts, and in their synagogues, ver. 6. 3. In loving to be respectfully saluted in open and public places, and to have those honourable titles of rabbi, master, father, doctor, given them, repeated, and often used to them; and affecting to be lords, and, as it were, absolute guides of the faith of others; whereas in that respect all are to have only one Father, viz. God (and not to give up their faith to be absolutely swayed by any, as children are to be swayed by their parents' bare will), and one Doctor and Teacher, and absolute Master, viz. Christ Jesus, to whom they ought to be scholars, and from whom they are to receive the doctrines they are to believe and embrace. With respect to others that are called fathers and doctors (as Paul calls himself the father of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. iv. 15. And also in Timothy, 1 Tim. i. 2. and a doctor of the Gentiles, 2 Tim. i. 11.), these are not so primarily, but instrumentally; they are but servants to this great Master, and must teach no other but his doctrine; he is the only law-giver, who in matters of faith and worship is only to be followed, Mat. xvii. 5. therefore the use of these titles is not here absolutely forbidden (which are then only wrongfully given unto men, when the glory of God is eclipsed thereby), but the ambitious affecting of them, and the priding themselves in them, and the lording it over the faith and consciences of others, which it seems the Pharisees were very ambitious of.

Our Saviour, having thus warned his disciples to take heed of imitating the pride and ambition of the Pharisees, now exhorts them to humility of mind, shewing them that the highest

highest dignity in his church does not consist in superiority or lordship over others, but in ministry and service: and they that would shew themselves more excellent than others, must serve others with the gifts God has given them, and not ambitiously arrogate superiority to themselves over others; for such as exalt themselves shall be brought down and abased, and such as humble themselves shall be exalted. From ver. 6, to 13.

4. Then turning his speech directly against the scribes and Pharisees, he denounces eight woes against them.

1. For opposing the gospel, by which the kingdom of God is set up in the hearts of men; and being so far from opening the right door of salvation to them (whatever they pretended), that when it was opened by John the Baptist, and himself, they would neither enter themselves, nor suffer others to enter, who shewed some willingness thereunto [John vii. 48, 49.]; and, challenging to themselves the key of interpreting the scriptures, would not rightly interpret those scriptures concerning the Messiah; and those persons who were ready to own him, and believe in him, they disheartened, by blaspheming him, and traducing his doctrine, and by threatening excommunication to all such as confessed him to be the Christ. See John ix. 22.

2. For their gross hypocrisy, in colouring over their covetousness with pretence of religion and devotion, pretending to make long prayers in the temple and synagogues for widows, and under pretence of benefiting them by their prayers, sucking gain and advantage from them, and persuading them to give bountifully to the corban, the common treasury of the temple; (some part of which, it seems, was employed for their maintenance); for which gross hypocrisy and avarice he declares they should, except they repented, be much more grievously punished in hell, ver. 15.

3. For their false-intended zeal, and earnestness to make proselytes, and convert heathens to the Jewish religion, aiming principally thereby, it seems, to make a prey of them, and to have their consciences and purses under their power. And then so depraving and poisoning them with their corrupt doctrine, and bad example, and so hardening them against believing in him the true Messiah, that they became more the children of hell and Satan, and were put into a far worse and more dangerous state, and more vehemently led to oppose the gospel, than even themselves their teachers, ver. 14.

4. For their false doctrine concerning oaths, evidenced by their making nothing of an oath made by the temple, but esteeming an oath made by the gold given to the corban of the temple obligatory; and preferring an oath made by the gift on the altar, above an oath made by the altar. It seems the Pharisees taught the people, that oaths made by the creatures were not binding, and therefore they might break them without perjury; yet they excepted the oaths made by the gold offered to the corban or treasury of the temple, and the sacrifices and oblations of the altar: such oaths as these they asserted to be binding; which it seems they did because it was for their profit that the gifts on the altar, and money brought into the treasury, should be counted most holy, and it would encourage the people to be more ready to contribute and offer. This horrid hypocrisy and avarice our Saviour here sharply reproveth, shewing that oaths made by the creatures had reference to God; and though swearing by them was unlawful, Mat. v. 33, &c. yet they who broke their oaths made by any of them, were highly guilty; and therefore the Pharisees did but discover hypocrisy and wickedness in making such a difference in such kind of oaths as to their binding and obligation. From ver. 16 to 23.

5. For their seeming very religious and exact in small things, "tithing mint, anise, and cummin, but neglecting the weightier matters of the law, as righteousness, mercy, and faithfulness," in promises and dealings with men. Thus very scrupulously (according to the proverb) they strained out a gnat from their drink, lest it should choak them, and without any remorse of conscience swallowed a camel, ver. 23, 24.

6. For their being so superstitious in the external washings and cleansings of their cups and platters, when yet that which they ate and drank out of them they got by injustice, and used with excess and intemperance. He shews them, how they should first look to the cleansing of their hearts and consciences from sin and wickedness, and cease from injustice, oppression, and intemperance (whereby their meat and drink was made unclean),
and

and so their platters and cups, that is, what they ate and drank out of them, would be clean also. Ver. 25, 26.

7. For their outward shews of piety (resembling whited sepulchres), but being within full of all hypocrisy and iniquity. Ver. 27, 28.

8. For their seeming to honour the prophets slain by their forefathers, building their tombs, garnishing their sepulchres, and disavowing the killing of them; yet if the malice of their hearts against him and his apostles be considered, he shews they are like their fathers, and go on in their sins, and may seem (whatever they pretended) to consent to their fathers in that their cruelty; and to do this for the slain prophets, not out of respect to them, but as if the sons of thieves should bury the bodies of those whom their fathers had slain [Luke xi. 48.]; and, seeing they were so bloodily disposed, with a bitter irony he bids them go on to "fill up the measure of their fathers' sins." As if he should have said, 'Your fathers stored up to themselves great wrath in killing the prophets, but yet the measure is not full; there remaineth something that you will do, to exceed their wickedness, and beyond which there can be nothing more impious, namely, the putting to death the Son of God, the Lord of all the prophets.' And he further shews, that they would exercise their cruelty on his apostles, and other teachers he should send unto them presently after his resurrection (whom, accommodating himself to the language of that time, he calls prophets, wise men, and scribes), and some of them they would kill (as Stephen and James); some they would crucify (as Simeon son of Cleopas, as Hegesippus reports, Euseb. lib. iii. Hist. cap. 16.), and some they would scourge in their synagogues (as Paul was five times served, 2 Cor. xi. 24.); and the issue of all will be, that they will bring upon themselves and their city so dreadful a desolation, as may seem sufficient to avenge for all the righteous blood that hath been shed, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias (called the son of Jehoiada, 2 Chron. xxiv. 22.) who was the last prophet whose death and murder is related by name in the Old Testament: it being just with God, that the children who follow the example of such wicked parents, and fill up the measure of sin by them begun, should suffer those dreadful punishments that are due to such high crimes and transgressions. From ver. 29 to 37.

Lastly, Turning his speech to the city of Jerusalem, he upbraids her for her cruelty against the former prophets of God sent unto her; and for her present obstinacy, in that he would have converted her inhabitants, and gathered them to himself, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, that so they might have escaped the wrath that hung over their heads; but they would not hearken to him, nor obey him. See Luke xiii. 34, 35. therefore he foretelleth her desolation and destruction to be at hand; and that after they have crucified him, they shall see him no more till his coming to judgment at the end of the world, at which time they should be glad to use such-like acclamations as were lately made to him (and which they were angry at), Mat. xxi. 9. saying, "Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord," though that would then nothing avail them: for then his most cruel enemies shall see and know, and acknowledge him to be the Christ, and "all knees shall bow to him, and all tongues shall confess him" to be the true Messiah, [Phil. ii. 10, 11.] Matt. xxvii. ver. 31, to the end.

As Christ sat over-against the treasury (that is, in that part of the court of the temple where the chest for receiving and keeping the offerings and gifts, given by the people to religious uses, was set; of which treasure-chest we read in 2 Kings xii. 9. 2 Chron. xxiv. 8. and Matt. xxvii. 6. called their Corbona, and from which it seems that part of the temple was called the treasury, John viii. 20.); he observed and took notice of those who offered thereunto. There was a special law given to the Jews, as we read, Exod. xxiii. 15. Deut. xvi. 16. that when they did assemble before God at those three solemn feasts of the passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, none should appear before the Lord empty, but every one should bring some gift or offering to be offered to him; and this being three days before the passover, several of the people (it seems) presented their offerings, and many that were rich gave liberally and bountifully; but a certain poor widow came and offered her two mites. Our Saviour, calling his disciples apart unto him, that he might instruct them

them how God accepts the will of those who give cheerfully, though they cannot give largely; and that neither the widow might be tempted to pride, nor the people to envy, he tells them, that this poor widow had cast in more in respect of the inward affection of her heart, and in proportion to her estate, than those rich and wealthy persons that had cast in before her: for they gave out of their abundance and store which lay by them, for which they had no present use; but she out of her penury, even all the money she had for the present to sustain herself with; so that having no more left, she must either work for more, before she had it, or must through the Providence of God be supported by the charity of others.

Our Saviour being now ready to depart from the temple (which he never after entered into), and his disciples shewing him, with a degree of admiration, the magnificent structures and buildings thereof, and the presents and gifts that had been contributed to it, and were there hung up for adorning it, he acquaints them with its approaching ruin and destruction; and that "one stone thereof should not be left upon another." This appeared something strange to his disciples, who thought, it seems, that the destruction of the temple would not only put an end to the Jewish way of worship, but would be the conclusion or consummation of the present age, and an ending of the world as to the Jewish religion and polity: therefore, when they were come out of the city, as far as Mount Olivet (our Saviour sitting down there on the mount, over-against and in view of the temple), four of them, viz. Peter, James, John, and Andrew, asked him two questions. 1. When this destruction he foretold should be? 2. What should be the signs of the approach of it, and of his coming in judgment to destroy the city and temple, and so to consummate and shut up the present age, and begin the new world, and kingdom of the Messiah, which they still dreamed should be a temporal one?

Our Saviour first answers to the last, namely, concerning the signs of this destruction of the city and temple, and gives them, 1. Some signs that should (not immediately, but) some time before, precede the accomplishment of these things. 2. Some signs that should immediately precede it.

He begins with shewing them the signs that should some time before precede the great destruction, as forerunners of it, and these are sundry.

1. The arising of false Christs, that should come in his name, boasting themselves to be the Messiah, and should draw many after them, Matt. xxiv. 4, 5. Josephus reports, that about these times, viz. before the destruction of Jerusalem, sundry such deceivers offered themselves to the Jews, under the name and person of the Messiah; in particular he mentions one Theudas (Antiq. lib. xx. cap. 5.) who persuaded a great company of the Jews to take with them all their goods, and to follow him to the river Jordan, boasting he would divide the waters of that river, and give them safe passage over, &c.

2. There should be wars, and rumours of wars: Josephus mentions divers civil broils and intestine commotions among themselves, and some other wars between them and other nations, as with the Romans, Syrians, Samaritans, before that great and last war which Titus made upon them, by which Jerusalem was destroyed.

3. There should be famines [see Acts xi. 28.] and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places, and fearful sights, and signs from heaven. Josephus, lib. vii. c. 11. recites divers prodigies which happened before the destruction of Jerusalem, as particularly that a blazing star in the fashion of a sword hung over the city for a year together; also that there appeared in the air chariots and horses, with troops of armed soldiers skirmishing in the clouds, and encompassing the city (of which more hereafter): and these calamities and troubles, he shews, are but the beginnings of greater sorrows which were to follow. Matt. xxiv. ver. 6, 7, 8. Luke xxi. 10, 11.

4. Great persecutions and other troubles should be raised against the apostles and other Christians for his Name's sake: for, 1. They should be delivered up by the unbelieving Jews to their councils, and convened before their courts and consistories; which accordingly came to pass, as we read in the fourth and fifth chapters of the Acts. 2. They should be beaten in their synagogues (in which they not only held their courts, but

punished offenders). 3. They should be brought before rulers, and kings, and governors, who were Gentiles, to be examined touching their faith; and that should be a testimony against their adversaries of the greatness of their sin, in that they not only rejected Christ and the Gospel preached unto them, but also persecuted those who preached and professed it. And when they should be brought thus before rulers, he bids them not to be anxiously solicitous, or filled with distrustful and distracting thoughts beforehand, what or how to speak and answer for themselves; for it should be given them in that hour what they should speak, and the Holy Ghost would assist them. He further shews them, that they, and such as believed in him, must expect that some, who were very near to them in kindred and alliance, would be instrumental to bring them into these troubles and dangers, and they should be hated of all sorts and conditions of wicked men, and enemies of Christ and the Gospel, and that for their profession of him and his doctrine; and should be delivered up to imprisonment, affliction, and death itself: and then it will so come to pass that many, by these sufferings, will be discouraged from following him any longer, and, to secure themselves, will betray others of their fellow-christians, and shew themselves malicious against them: and by reason of these things, hypocrisy and iniquity will much abound, and they who profess Christianity will grow suspicious one of another, and not dare to trust one another, and so grow cold in their love and charity one towards another. However, he exhorts them to persevere in the faith, notwithstanding all trials and persecutions, and constantly to adhere to him; for to such as do so, he will give eternal life and salvation in his heavenly kingdom. And as for this life, they ought to believe, that no man should be able to hurt them in the least, or to touch a hair of their heads, without the will of their heavenly Father; therefore they should in patience possess their souls, Matt. xxiv. 9, 10, 12, 13. Mark xiii. 9, 11, 12, 13. Luke xxi. from 12 to 20.

5. Many false prophets and heretical teachers shall arise (such as the Gnosticks, and the Nicolaitans: such as Hymenæus and Philetus, the followers of Simon Magus; and others, that mingled either Judaism or Paganism with Christianity); and these, by their fair pretences and subtle practices, would draw away many from the truth, whom open persecution could not drive from it, Matt. xxiv. 11.

6. The Gospel must be preached among all nations, viz. among all the chief and principal nations in those parts of the world (whereas before it had been preached only to the Jews), and that to testify unto them, that Christ is the only Messiah and Saviour; and so to leave them without excuse, if they should not believe and embrace his doctrine. And accordingly the Gospel was preached by the apostles and other ministers, not only to the Jews, but to all other the chief nations and people thereabouts; as may appear from Mark xvi. 20. and from the history of the Acts of the apostles, which relates into how many places and parts of the world the apostles (especially Paul) went to preach the Gospel. And though they did not preach in every particular town, city, and country in the world, yet they preached in so many, that at least the fame and report of their doctrine could not but come unto all the chief parts of the world; as it is said, Rom. x. 18. "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world," Col. i. 6. "Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world,"—Ver. 23.—"And which was preached to every creature which is under heaven." And when all these things are come to pass, he shews them, that then the destruction of the city and temple, and the end of the Jewish state will approach, Matt. xxiv. 14. Mark xiii. 10.

2. He shews the signs that should immediately precede and go before that great destruction.

1. The besieging of the city by the Roman army, which was fore-prophefied by Daniel, ch. ix. 27. When therefore they should see that abominable, desolating army begirting the holy city (towards which the Gentiles were not to be suffered to approach), then, he shews, is the season for all the believing Jews, that are in any part of the land of Judæa, to get out of it, with all possible speed, not suffering any thing to hinder them, and to fly to the mountains of Arabia, or some other place to secure themselves. And he foretells the doleful distress that such would be in, who were at that time unfit to fly and escape,

as "women with child," and "such as give suck," &c. And he exhorts them to pray, that they may not be necessitated to fly on a sabbath (many of the Jews judging it unlawful, it seems, though in case of necessity, to travel further on that day than a sabbath-day's journey), nor in the winter season, for that would be grievous and dangerous. And he further intimates, that between the Romans spoiling all before them, on the one hand; and the Zealots and their accomplices (who committed most shocking outrages and slaughters) on the other, and the miserable pressures of the siege, such dreadful tribulation and distresses would fall on those people at that time, as had never fallen on them before, nor ever should again. And if the Lord should suffer those grievous calamities to continue long, and not put an end to them, by Titus's speedily taking the city, scarce any of the Jews would escape destruction, but most of them would be cut off, either by the Romans, or by their mutual slaughtering one another; but for his Elect's sake among that people (who either then lived, or were afterwards to be born of them), he would shorten those days, by giving the city into the hands of Titus sooner than could in reason have been expected, Luke xxi. from 20 to 24. Matt. xxiv. from 15 to 23. Mark xiii. from 14 to 21.

2. He shews that, immediately before the destruction of Jerusalem, false Christs professing themselves to be the true Messiahs, and false prophets suborned, set on work, and employed by those false Christs, to draw disciples after them, should arise among the Jews, and should labour to seduce the people. Therefore he admonishes them, and all other Christians that were to live about the time here spoken of (to whom the apostles were to make known this admonition), that when any such false teachers should come unto them, persuading them that in such or such a place they should find the true Messiah, who would be a Saviour and deliverer to them from their enemies, and the miseries that were come upon them, if they would repair thither, and seek him, and join themselves to him, they should by no means hearken to them, nor go after them. Josephus reports, lib. vii. c. 11, that divers such seducers did at this very time arise, and one main thing which gave occasion to them was this, that the Jews, being then in great distress and misery, were very apt to believe and hearken to any who would promise them deliverance from their misery and bondage; for such a temporal deliverer they vainly supposed the Messiah should be. And our Saviour further tells them, that these seducers should shew signs and wonders, that is, some false and counterfeit miracles, and lying wonders, such as the apostle speaks of, 2 Thes. ii. and should so far prevail, that they should (if it were possible) deceive the very elect: but such shall not be left to their own strength, but preserved by the power of God; so that though they may be endangered, they shall not be finally and irrecoverably deceived, Matt. xxiv. from 23 to 27. Mark xiii. from 21 to 24.

3. Having shewed both the signs that should some time before precede, and those that would be the immediate forerunners of the destruction of Jerusalem, he now comes to describe the destruction itself, which he sets forth as the destruction of the whole world, it being (as is held by many) a type of it. And therefore Christ's coming to take vengeance on this wicked nation, is called, The coming of the Son of man in his kingdom, which he had promised before, that some of his disciples should see, as we find in Matt. xvi. 28. and was verified in John, as we may gather from John xxi. 22. which apostle is said to have lived thirty years after that destruction.

Now our Saviour intended to appear in glory and power, to take vengeance on the obdurate Jews, and his coming against them he shews would be sudden like lightning, and unavoidable; so that in all places within the land, especially at Jerusalem (where the main body of them was met together at the passover), the Roman armies under Titus (who carried the eagle in their standard) would find them out, as eagles or vultures do a dead carcase, Matt. xxiv. 28, 29. Josephus says, that no less than one million one hundred thousand were slain by the sword, pestilence, and famine, at the siege of Jerusalem, which lasted not above five months, or thereabouts; and that there were ninety-seven thousand taken captives by the Romans. And to this dreadful time those words of Luke seem to belong, ch. xxi. 24, 25, 26, 27. Now also did those lamentable events come to pass which are in figurative expressions (in allusion possibly to the day of the universal judgment) set forth Matt. xxiv. 29. "Immediately after the tribulation of those

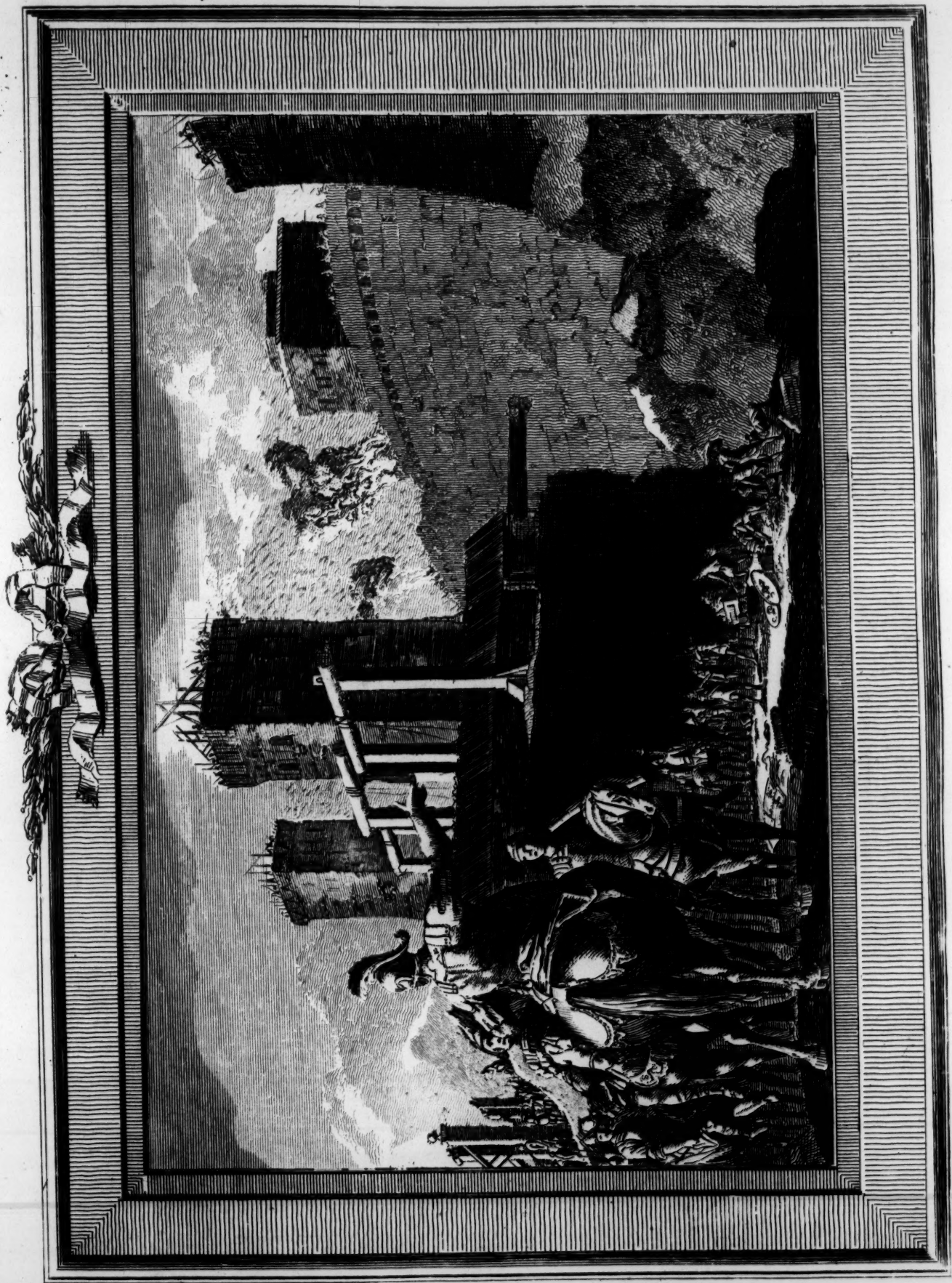
those days the sun shall be darkened," &c. Which expression imports the decay of all glory, excellency, and prosperity in that nation, and the coming in of all sadness, misery, and confusion, as may be gathered from the like phrases importing the like things in the prophets Isaiah and Joel, Isa. xiii. 10. "The stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine;" importing the miseries and calamities that then shall fall on the men of Babylon, and their land, Joel ii. 30. "And I will shew wonders in the heavens, and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke," ver. 31. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come." Which words are a prediction of this very calamity and destruction that was to come on the Jewish polity, their city and temple, at this time, and so applied by Peter, Acts ii. 19, 20. and therefore to these words of the prophet our Saviour seems here to allude, ver. 30. "Then shall they see the sign of the Son of man," &c. that is, not any visible appearance of Christ (as it is probable), but either some extraordinary prodigy in the heavens, which should manifest that Christ did, as it were, now appear from heaven against the Jews in that dreadful judgment; and whereas they would not own him before for the true Messiah (when he was here in the flesh, and in the state of humiliation), now, by the vengeance he should execute upon them, they and all the world should see an evident sign that he was so. This therefore is called his coming, and his coming in his kingdom (as we shewed before), because this was the first evident declaration of his power, glory, and victory over that nation which had so wretchedly despised him. Ver. 31. "And shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet," &c. that is, his ministers with the trumpet of the gospel to fetch in his elect among the Gentiles, when the Jews were now destroyed and cast off. And he further acquaints them, that when they should see these things come to pass, then they, and all true Christians, that have been so long persecuted by the unbelieving Jews, might lift up their heads with cheerfulness, as knowing that their redemption and deliverance from the dangers that encompassed them drew nigh; and, as by the sight of a fig-tree, when the branches are soft, and there is a budding out of leaves, they might discern that the time was nigh.

Collection of PREDICTIONS concerning the Destruction of the JEWISH State.

In the course of this work, we have frequently endeavoured to prove, from the miracles of our Saviour, that he was possessed of a divine power: to the arguments then used we shall now add, as farther proofs of the same thing, his predictions of many events, which were afterwards punctually fulfilled: that he should suffer at Jerusalem: that there he should be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, who would condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged: that Judas was the person who would betray him: that the other disciples would forsake him; that, particularly Peter would deny him thrice; that, as to the manner of his death, it should be crucifixion; and that he should rise again the third day. To which we may add his foretelling the manner of St. Peter's death, and that St. John should live to see the destruction of Jerusalem; together with the persecutions which would befall the apostles after his death, and the mission of the Holy Ghost to comfort and enlighten them, and to enable them effectually to preach and propagate the gospel.

But most remarkable to this purpose, is his foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the whole Jewish nation, with the several circumstances of it; as the time of its coming, the destruction of the city, the demolishing of the temple, the judgments upon the nation in general, and their final dispersion: all which were distinctly foretold by Christ.

As to the time; our Saviour having enumerated the dismal calamities that were coming upon the Jews, declares, That "that generation should not pass, until all these things were fulfilled;" and he supposes, that some at least of those to whom he spake, when he enumerated the signs of their coming, should be then alive; "Ye, when ye shall see
all



The SIEGE of JERUSALEM.



all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors;" and, after his resurrection, he intimates that St. John should live to see those terrible judgments; which in scripture are expressed by his coming, and which were all executed, according to those predictions, in less than forty years from the time they were denounced.

He also denoted this time by the signs that should then appear, particularly by the coming of false Christs and false prophets. False Christs were such as took upon them the name of the Messiah, and pretended to be endued with the authority which they expected in that deliverer. Of these was Dositheus, who said he was the Christ foretold by Moses, and of whom Origen testifies, that he did prodigious things: and Simon Magus, who said he appeared among the Jews as the Son of God, and who is said by the sacred historians to have so "bewitched the Samaritans with his forceries, that they all believed on him."

Other signs of these times, foretold by our Lord, were famines, earthquakes, pestilences, tumults, fearful sights, and great signs from heaven; all which happened punctually according to the predictions. Josephus tells us, That a sword seemed to hang over the city, or a comet pointing down upon it, for a year, which plainly seemed to portend their ruin by the sword: that before the sun went down, there were seen in the clouds, armies in battle-array, and chariots encompassing the country, and investing their cities, as many then could testify; that the great gate of the temple, which was made fast with bolts and bars, was seen to open of its own accord, as it were to let in their enemies; that at the ninth hour of the night, at the feast of unleavened bread, as great a light shone upon the altar, as if it had been noon-day: that at the feast of Pentecost, when the priests went at midnight into the temple to attend their service, they first heard a kind of noise, as of a movement from the place, and then a voice, saying, Let us go hence. All these things Tacitus, a Roman historian of that age, has thus epitomized: Armies seemed to meet in the clouds, weapons were there seen glittering, the temple seemed to be in a flame, with fire issuing from the clouds, and a divine voice was heard, that the Deity was quitting the place, and a great motion of his departing. And Josephus adds a thing, which he thought yet more terrible; that for four years before the war, one Jesus began at the feast of tabernacles to cry, 'A voice against Jerusalem and the temple! A voice against all the people! Woe! woe unto them!' and that he continued crying this about seven years. So expressly is verified the account of the frightful things, and signs from heaven, mentioned by our Lord. The judgments that would fall upon the nation in general are thus expressed by our Saviour: "These be the days of vengeance: there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people, and they shall fall by the edge of the sword."

According to Eusebius, the whole Roman empire, but particularly Palestine, was dreadfully oppressed by famine, to which vast numbers of people fell sacrifices. Gro-tius mentions several earthquakes during the reigns of Claudius and Nero, at Crete, Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Coloss, all which places were inhabited by the Jews.

Thus it appears from indisputable testimony, that the predictions of our Saviour, concerning the signs that would precede the desolation that awaited the Jewish nation, were fully accomplished; and pursuing his discourse on this subject, Josephus* writes in the following manner: "But the most extraordinary story of the whole still remains un-related. About four years before the commencement of the war, and while the city appeared to be in the most perfect peace and unbounded plenty, there came to the feast of tabernacles, which is annually celebrated to the honour of God, a simple countryman, named Jesus, who was the son of Ananus, and who, without any previous intimation, exclaimed in the following manner; 'A voice from the east; a voice from the west; a voice from the four quarters of the world; a voice to Jerusalem, and a voice to the temple; a voice to men and women newly married, and a voice to the nation at large.'

* See BRADSHAW'S JOSEPHUS, 4to. edit. Wars, book vii. c. 11, p. 553, &c.

In this manner did he continue his exclamations night and day, and in various places, through all the streets of the city. Some persons of eminence in the government were so offended at the freedom of the ill-omen'd exclamation, that they directed that the man should be apprehended and whipped severely. He bore his sufferings, not only without complaint of the injustice of them, but without saying a word in his defence: but his punishment was no sooner ended, than he proceeded as before, with his denouncing exclamations. By this time the magistrates were suspicious (and not without reason) that what he had said, proceeded from the divine impulse of a superior power that influenced his words. Hereupon he was sent to Albinus, the governor of Judæa, who directed that he should be whipped with such severity, that his bones appeared; yet, even in this situation, he neither wept nor supplicated; but in a voice of mourning, he repeated after each stroke, 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem!' On this extraordinary conduct, Albinus was induced to interrogate him with respect to his character, and the place of his birth and residence, and what could induce him to proceed as he had done: but he replied not to any of these questions; whereupon Albinus found himself under a necessity of dismissing him, as a man out of his senses. From this period to the commencement of the war, it was not known that Jesus visited or spoke to any of the citizens; nor was he heard to say any other words, than that melancholy sentence; 'Woe, woe to Jerusalem!' Those who daily punished him, received no ill language from him; nor did those who fed him, receive his thanks: but his general speech to every one was an ominous prediction. It was remarked, that on public festivals, he was more vociferous than on other occasions: and in the manner above-mentioned, he continued to proceed for the space of seven years and five months; nor did his voice or strength fail him, till his predictions were verified by the siege of Jerusalem. When this event had taken place, he went, for the last time, on the wall, and exclaimed, in a more powerful voice than usual, 'Woe, woe to this city, this temple, and this people;' and he concluded his lamentation by saying, 'Woe, woe to myself.' He had no sooner spoken these words, than he was destroyed by a stone thrown from an engine.

From what has been above recited, continues our author, it will be evident to mankind in general, that our destruction arises from our misconduct; and that Providence, by the gift of our reasonable faculties, as well as by the aids of prediction and revelation, has contributed in an abundant degree to the general good and lasting advantage of all its creatures. Our ruin is certainly to be attributed to ourselves, when we refuse to take warning, after being premonished of future events."

Thus have we the positive evidence of a rigid advocate for the principles of Judaism, that he was himself an actual witness to the full accomplishment of several of the predictions of our blessed Redeemer; of whom, with that candour and regard to truth, which contribute infinitely more than the finest literary acquirements, to render the character of an historian truly respectable, he speaks in the following terms*: "About this period, there arose to notice one Jesus, a man of consummate wisdom, IF INDEED HE MAY BE DEEMED A MAN. He was eminently celebrated for his power of working miracles; and those who were curious, and desirous to learn the truth, flocked to him in abundance. He was followed by immense numbers of people, both Jews and Gentiles. This was that Christ whom the princes and great men of our nation accused. He was delivered up to the cross by Pontius Pilate; notwithstanding which, those who originally adhered to him, never forsook him. On the third day after his crucifixion, he was seen alive, agreeable to the prediction of several prophets. He wrought a great number of marvellous acts: and there remain even to this day a sect of people who bear the name of Christians, and who acknowledge this Christ for their head."

The destruction of Jerusalem, and its attendant circumstances, are thus described by our Saviour. "Thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children

* BRADSHAW'S JOSEPHUS, Antiq. book xviii. c. 4, p. 330.

within thee : and they shall not leave within thee one stone upon another," Luke xix. 43, 44. Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, no, nor ever shall be," Matt. xxiv. 21. These prophecies were fulfilled by Titus, who encompassed the city with new fortifications, which were erected by his troops in the space of three days. Titus directed * his officers immediately to begin the erection of the wall, and let the whole army take a share in the business, assigning to each party its proper station. These orders were no sooner issued, than every soldier was animated with a wish to exceed his fellows in this work. The ground was measured out, the legions were divided, and every man was emulous who should most effectually distinguish himself. The common soldiers copied the example of the serjeants ; the serjeants that of the captains ; the captains that of the tribunes ; and the tribunes that of their superior officers ; the whole being under the direction of Titus, whose zeal for the dispatch of this business was such, that he was continually taking his rounds to superintend the whole proceeding.

" This wall commenced at a place called the Camp of the Assyrians, where Titus himself held his head-quarters. Hence it was continued to the lower Cœnopolis ; carried forward by the way of Cedron to Mount Olivet, which was inclosed to the south as far as the rock Peristereon ; and this inclosure comprehended an adjacent hill, which commands the vale of Siloah. From this place it inclined somewhat to the west, and was carried on to the valley of the Fountain. Its next direction was to the sepulchre of Ananus, the high-priest ; after this, it inclosed the mountain on which Pompey had heretofore encamped. It then turned to the north, and was extended to the village named Erebinthonicus. It included the sepulchre of Herod on the east-side ; and soon afterwards was joined to that part of the wall where the building originally commenced.

" Nine and thirty furlongs was the whole extent of this wall ; and thirteen forts were erected on the outside of it, ten furlongs being the compass of each fort. It is somewhat extraordinary, but not less so than true, that this amazing work was completed in three days, though an equal number of months might have been supposed a reasonable time for it. As soon as it was finished, garrisons were placed in all the forts, who did duty under arms every night. On each night likewise, Titus went the first round in person ; Tiberius Alexander the second ; and the officers who commanded the legions the third. Some persons were constantly on guard in the forts during the whole night : but some of the soldiers were allowed to rest alternately, with others who were appointed to watch.

" The above-mentioned inclosure of the Jews within the town, reduced them to the last degree of despair ; for by this time the famine had increased to such a height, that whole families fell a sacrifice to its rage. The dead bodies of women and children were seen in every house ; the old men were found dead in all the narrow lanes of the city, while the younger men, who were yet able to walk, appeared like ghosts parading the streets. It became impossible to commit the bodies of the dead to the ground. Many of the living were unable to perform this charitable office ; while others were unwilling to undertake it, partly discouraged by the numbers of the deceased, and partly by the reflection, that themselves would not survive any considerable time. Numbers of them expired, even while they were burying their fellow-citizens ; and some, prompted by despair, fought their own graves.

" Yet, miserably distressful as the present situation of these wretched people was, not a single complaint or lamentation was heard ; for the pangs of excessive hunger absorbed every other passion. Those who last expired, beheld those who had gone before them, with unweeping eyes, and looks marked with the near approach of death. The most profound silence reigned through every part of the city ; and during the course of the night, heaps of dead bodies were frequently piled on each other.

" Yet a more melancholy part of the story (if more melancholy can be) still remains untold. This arose from the brutal insolence of a number of thieves, who broke into the houses, that at this time appeared only like charnel-houses, and having stripped the

* See the work last quoted, book vi. c. 12, p. 534.

bodies of the dead, they derided their situation: exclusive of which, they ran their swords into the bodies of persons who lay expiring. When any despairing wretch called for some friendly hand to dispatch him by a sword, that he might no longer endure the miseries of famine, this earnest request was constantly refused with the most unfeeling barbarity. When any of the unfortunate reached the moment of death, they turned their faces to the temple, and thus closed their eyes; lamenting at the same time, that the vile incendiaries who had profaned the holy place, should be yet left among the living. When the offensive smells arising from the corruption of the dead bodies, became insupportable, an order was given that all of them should be buried at the public expence: the abandoned incendiaries threw them from the walls into the vallies; a sight that occasioned so much horror to Titus, that while he was going his rounds, and found the ditches infested with dead bodies, and pestilential vapours arising from them, he extended his hands towards heaven, and made a solemn appeal to God, that these misfortunes arose not from any orders he had given. At the period, of which I am writing, this was the unfortunate situation of the city.

"The insurgents were now so pent up within the walls, that they found it impossible for any of them to quit the place. In the mean time, they endured all the pangs of famine, aggravated by the tortures of despair; while, on the contrary, the Romans lived at their ease, and passed their time very agreeably, being supplied with the necessaries of life from Syria and the adjacent provinces. Encouraged by their better fortune, many of the Romans advanced to the walls, and made an ostentatious display of their provisions, with a view to reflect on the necessities of those who were in circumstances of distress. All this appeared to have no effect on the unfeeling minds of the seditious multitude: whereupon Titus, in mere compassion to the residue of an unhappy people, determined on the immediate erection of new works, and resolved that no time should be lost in their completion. One considerable difficulty, indeed, now occurred, which was the providing proper materials for carrying these works into execution; for all the wood in the neighbourhood of the city had been cut down, for the erection of the former works: wherefore they were under the necessity of fetching all the timber for this second supply, from a place at the distance of ninety furlongs: and herewith four ramparts, of greater magnitude than the former, were erected at the fortress of Antonia. Titus carried on this business with great assiduity; and the besieged being now at his mercy, he plainly hinted to them, that he knew their situation. Still, however, they shewed no concern for what had happened: they seemed to have no regard for themselves, or each other. Those who were decaying with sickness, they confined in prisons, and tore the dead to pieces as dogs would have done."

"The Jewish historian further * informs us, that immediately after the conquest of the city of Jerusalem, it was entirely levelled with the ground; and that during the war, "No less than ninety-seven thousand persons were made prisoners; and the number of those who lost their lives during its progress, was eleven hundred thousand. Of these, far the greater part were Jews, though not born in Judæa." To account for this amazing resort of people to the city of Jerusalem, it is necessary to observe, that they had assembled from all parts of the country, in order to celebrate the passover.

Our blessed Saviour predicted the destruction of the temple in the following manner: "Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down," Matt. xxiv. 2. And in addition to what we learn from Josephus, Maimonides, another Jewish writer, says, that Turnus Rufus dug up the very ground on which the temple stood with plough-shares. This was a remarkable completion of the following prophecy: "Therefore shall Zion for your sakes be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest," Mic. iii. 12. It is also remarkable, that the conflagration of the temple hap-

* BRADSHAW'S JOSEPHUS, book vii. c. 17. p. 560, 561.

pened on the same day of the same month on which it had been before burnt by the Babylonians.

The general judgments that were to befall the Jewish nation, are thus mentioned by our Saviour. "For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days: for there shall be great distress in the land, and upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," Luke xxi. 22, 23, 24. According to these predictions, they were cut off in war, to the number of upwards of two hundred thousand, in divers sieges and battles, and in different towns, and various parts of the country, exclusive of the dreadful carnage at the final destruction of Jerusalem. After mentioning the conquest of Jerusalem, Josephus says, "There is scarce a habitable part of the globe, in which some of the Jewish people are not dispersed; and from the same writer we learn, that "They who appeared to be in full health, and fit for service, were imprisoned in the temple, in that quarter heretofore destined to the use of the women. Fronto, one of the freed-men and friends of Titus, was deputed to enquire into the cases of the prisoners, and to treat them according to their deserts. The abandoned, the seditious, and such who mutually charged each other with crimes, were put to death without mercy: but Titus reserved the young and healthy, particularly those of a comely appearance, to grace his triumph on his entrance into Rome. All those who remained after this selection, and were above seventeen years of age, were sent in chains into Egypt, to be employed as slaves; and those who were under seventeen, he sent into the various provinces of the empire, to be engaged as gladiators in the several theatres. In the interim, no less than eleven thousand of the prisoners who were under the care of Fronto, were starved to death; partly owing to their own obstinacy in the refusal of provisions, and partly to the severity of their overseers, who neglected to supply them in a proper manner: but one great cause which aggravated this calamity, was the want of sufficient provisions for such an immense number." From this period, the Jews have been a dispersed and scattered people throughout all the nations of the earth, having neither country, nor government of their own.

That the predictions of our blessed Saviour, when accomplished, were intended by him to be proofs of his being the real Messiah, we may collect from his own words. Having informed his disciples that he should be betrayed by Judas, our Saviour soon after adds, "Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He." And after the predictions of his death, resurrection, and ascension, he says, "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe."

Christ having thus answered one of the questions which his apostles propounded to him, viz. concerning the signs of the destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, and of the Jewish polity, and described the manner of that great destruction; comes now to the other, namely, concerning the precise time, when these things should come to pass; and for that he tells them, they must not expect to have this revealed to them, it being hid both from men and angels, yea and from the Son of God himself, as he was man (and at that time in the state of his humiliation on the earth), his Godhead having not as yet revealed it to his human nature; but after his exaltation, the Book of God's providence, sealed with seven seals, should be fully opened to him, Rev. v. 5, &c. and therefore he tells them, that for the present, only the Father knew the particular time thereof; yet so as the Son as he is God, and the Holy Ghost, are not excluded from the knowledge of it, Matt. xxiv. 36. Mark xiii. 32. However, these two things he acquaints them with concerning it:

1. That this judgment on the Jews would be like that on the old world, in regard of the unexpectedness of it. For as in that age the people went on secure and unmoved in their evil course, notwithstanding the six score years of Noah's preaching, and at last building an ark, whereby they should have been warned, but took no more notice of it than if

they had never heard of any such thing, till the very time the flood surpris'd them; so it shall be in the approaching destruction of this nation, Matt. xxiv. 37, 38, 39.

2. There shall be much of God's providence discern'd in discriminating and rescuing one from that calamity, wherein another shall fall: for they who believed in Christ, did generally, it seems, before Titus laid his siege to the city, depart out of the land, being hurried out of it, as Lot was by an angel out of Sodom, and so escaped; but others remained behind, and so were destroyed, Matt. xl. 41.

Seeing therefore the judgment was so certain, yet the time of it so uncertain, he exhorts them,

1. To look carefully to themselves; to watch and pray always, that is, without giving over (not without any intermission), that they may be accounted worthy to escape these great calamities: and particularly, that they should take heed of all intemperance and worldly-mindedness, and the immoderate cares of this life, which would unfit them to watch and prepare for this his coming, which would be very sudden and unexpected. Therefore as a master of a family, if he knew at what time a thief would come to break into his house, would certainly watch and be ready at the time to prevent that mischief to himself; but seeing he cannot know that, he had need always to watch, and be provided, lest being secure, his house should be unexpectedly broken up and spoiled: so they had need be always ready, and to watch continually, for else the coming of the Son of man might surprise them unawares, Mark xiii. 33. Matt. xxiv. 42, 43, 44. Luke xxi. 34, 35, 36.

2. By the parable of a Master of a Family, who being to take a long journey, left his house, and gave authority to his servants, in order to govern it in his absence, appointing to every one of them his proper work and employment, and enjoining them carefully to do their duties, and to expect and prepare for his return, &c. he intimates to them, that himself is Lord and Master of a house, which is his true church on earth; that he was shortly to take a far journey from earth to heaven, whither he was after his death and resurrection to ascend: that then he was to leave his church on earth in some sort, viz. as he was man, and in respect of his bodily presence; though, as God, he meant never to leave it; that he would then give authority to his apostles and ministers of his Gospel to dispense unto it the spiritual food of his word and sacraments, and to rule and govern it according to his directions in his absence: and those of his servants who should approve themselves faithful and diligent in teaching and instructing his church, and in ruling and governing it, according to the directions of his word, would be exceedingly happy in being found so doing, and would be highly rewarded by him. But if any of them, presuming it will be long ere their Lord come, or that he will not come to visit, as he said he would [3 Pet. iii. 4.], and promising themselves life, and time to repent, shall exercise tyranny (by virtue of their authority) over their fellow-servants, and indulge themselves in licentious and scandalous living; he tells them, that sudden and unavoidable destruction shall come upon such servants, and they shall have the portion that is deservedly and justly inflicted on hypocrites, Mark xiii. 34. Matt. xxiv. from 45 to the end.

Lastly, He renews his former exhortation to watchfulness, from the uncertainty of the time of his coming, and from the danger of their being found secure and unprepared: and this exhortation, he declares, does not concern them only, but all other Christians also, Mark xiii. 35, 36, 37.

Our Saviour having (as we have seen above) exhorted his disciples, and in them all Christians to watchfulness, and to be ready and prepared against his coming, and knowing that, through human infirmity, they would be apt to be remiss and negligent in that duty, therefore he here inculcates that precept again, and urges the necessity of it from two eminent parables.

The first is that of ten Virgins, who were to wait for the coming of the Bridegroom. This parable is grounded upon the rite and custom which was usual in the weddings of those times (which were kept by night, as we may see, Luke xii. 35, 36.) in which the bridegroom, with a choice company of young men, called the children of the bride-chamber,

Matt. ix. 15. came to the house of the bride, where certain virgins of the acquaintance or kindred of the bride expected his coming, that they might with burning lamps conduct him in thither, and might go before him when he led his bride from her own house to that he had prepared for her, where they were feasted and entertained with all expressions of joy and rejoicing. In this parable, therefore, 1. By the kingdom of heaven, we are to understand the visible church, in which Christ exercises his kingly power. 2. By the coming of the bridegroom, the coming of Christ to judgment. 3. By the virgins, such as profess christianity, and had kept themselves from heathenish idolatry, and open pollutions. 4. By the wise, all upright and sincere Christians. 5. By the foolish, such as are only Christians in outward profession, but are inwardly void of the saving graces of the Spirit of God. 6. By lamps, profession of faith and sanctity, and an expectation of Christ's coming to judgment. 7. By oil in their vessels, the saving graces of effectual faith, repentance, and love in their hearts. 8. By the bridegroom's tarrying, the time of repentance allowed to the children of men. 9. By the slumbering that all fell into, the security and want of watchfulness that both the one and the other, the wise and the foolish, were (in several degrees) subject to: for even true believers may sometimes be more negligent than they should be, and, as it were, slumber for a time; yet they do not totally and finally sleep in sin, as unbelievers do, but their faith and love is afterwards awakened again. 10. By the bridegroom's coming at midnight, when they were not aware of it, Christ's coming to judgment in a way and hour that men expect not. 11. By the foolish virgins' wanting oil, their want of faith shining in good works. 12. By the going out of their lamps, the detection of their hypocrisy and unsoundness. 13. By the wise virgins' not helping the foolish to oil, is meant, that it is in vain for the wicked to think to be saved by the faith and holiness of the saints. 14. By their sending them, when it was too late, to buy oil; that they who neglect the following after, and acquiring true grace and holiness here, have no means left to do it hereafter. 15. By the wise virgins' being admitted, and the foolish excluded from the wedding feast; that the inwardly renewed and sincere Christians shall be received into heaven, whilst they that are void of true grace shall be for ever excluded and disowned by Christ, Matt. xxv. from 1 to 14.

The second parable our Lord propounds to them, was, of a man travelling into a far country, and delivering several talents to his servants, to trade withal, and improve against his return, &c. By which we are to understand, Christ's giving several gifts to his servants, to employ for his glory, and the good of others, who at his coming will liberally reward the diligent, but severely punish the negligent, who (as evil servants use to do) will be ready to transfer the fault, of their not improving their talents, from themselves upon him their Master, as if he were a severe exactor of all that is any manner of way due to him, yea required more than was due to him, and expected more than they could perform; which is intimated by that proverbial speech they make use of, That "he reaped where he had not sown, and gathered where he had not sowed;" and so they cast the blame of their own sloth on God, as if he denied grace, and yet commanded things they were not able to do without it. Our Saviour, to convince them of their unreasonableness, tells them, that if they had such unworthy thoughts of God, that he would reap where he did not sow, they ought much rather to conclude, that he would certainly expect to reap where he did sow, and require an account of his talents given: and therefore such thoughts (how false soever of God) should have made them stir up themselves to more diligence. And if they would not have traded with their talents themselves, they should have placed them with those that kept banks, and take men's money, and make profit for them, &c. that is, they should one way or other have so employed them, as might have redounded to the glory of the giver of them: for it is not sufficient not to waste them, but they ought to increase them. And whosoever doth improve his talents, he shall have them increased, and his faithfulness and diligence shall be amply rewarded; but as for him who doth not well employ his talents, those he had shall be taken away, and he shall be severely punished for his sloth and negligence, and without repentance cast into utter darkness, and the dungeon of eternal pains and horror. From ver. 14 to 31.

From

From this parable Christ comes to describe the proceedings of the last and universal judgment, wherein he sets forth,

1. That he himself shall be the judge at that great assize.
2. That his coming to judgment shall be glorious, and full of majesty, all the holy angels attending him.
3. That a glorious throne (befeeching the Son of God, and the Judge of quick and dead) shall be erected for him.
4. That all nations shall appear before him to be judged, even all that were from the beginning of the world to that day.
5. That he shall separate the sheep from the goats, the righteous from the wicked; setting the one on his right hand, the other on his left.
6. He shall pronounce the joyful sentence of absolution upon the godly, saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father," &c. and shall set forth the fruits of their faith and love towards himself, and bring to light their good works, as a testimony that they were sincere believers, saying, "Ye fed me: ye clothed me: ye visited me." They, hearing this, shall exceedingly wonder that their works, which they in their life-time esteemed so little of, and had no confidence in, should be so much taken notice of by Christ, and that he should declare himself so nearly conjoined with his faithful servants, that in all their afflictions he should count himself afflicted; and should be so much concerned in all the works of love performed to them for his sake, as to esteem the least kindness shewn to them, as done to himself.
7. After the absolution of the faithful, the wicked shall receive the sentence of condemnation: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," &c. adding, as a reason of their condemnation, their want of love to him and his members: "Ye fed me not: ye clothed me not," &c.
8. The sentence of absolution shall be executed as pronounced, and so shall the sentence of condemnation also: everlasting life shall be the portion of the godly, and everlasting punishment the portion of the wicked. From ver. 31 to the end.

Our Saviour having thus preached this his prophetic sermon (as we may call it) on Mount Olivet, in the evening he comes to Bethany again, and there sups. And having constantly and immutably loved his own, and knowing that now his time to depart from them was at hand, he resolves to give them a further proof and demonstration of his love to them; therefore, before supper was ended, knowing that Satan had put it into the heart of Judas to betray him (though all power and authority was committed to him by the Father; and as he came from God in his incarnation, so he was returning to God by the chariot of his sufferings), he ariseth from supper, and laying aside his upper garment (which was loose), as servants used to do when they went to serve their masters, and girding himself with a towel, that he might have it in more readiness, and pouring water into a bason, he began to wash his disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. John xiii. 1 to 6.

Simon Peter refuses to admit of such a condescension from him, thinking it strange that his Lord and Master should wash his feet. Our Saviour tells him, there was more in it than the bare act of washing at first sight imported, or than he saw at present, but he should better understand the meaning of it in due time; namely, when the Spirit should be poured forth; then he, and the rest of his fellow-apostles should more fully discern the meaning of this, and other gospel-mysteries. But Peter still refusing that his Master should humble himself so low as to wash his feet, our Saviour takes this ill, and acquaints him with the danger of such a refusal. For this external washing imported the washing of the soul, and purging it from the guilt and defilement of sin, which, as it can only be done by him the true Messiah; so, without it, no man can have interest in him, or communion with him. Peter, now better understanding what was meant by this outward washing, is so far from refusing that Christ should wash his feet, that he offers hands, and head, and all, to be washed by him. To this our Saviour answers by this similitude: as a man coming from a bath, needs not wash his whole body again, but only his feet, which

which contract filth by walking; so faints, who are already washed from the guilt of their sins by faith in his blood, and have a work of sanctification really begun in them by his Spirit, ought not to think that every spot they contract alters their state, but ought to be daily purging and purifying their affections and actions (which are continually apt to be soiled in passing through this polluted world) by a fresh recourse to his blood for renewed remission, and to his Spirit and grace for further degrees of sanctification; and he makes particular application of this doctrine to the disciples, pronouncing all that society clean in this sense, excepting one, namely Judas. From ver. 6 to 12.

Then taking his garments, and sitting down again, he explains the meaning of this washing, as it was a servile employment performed by him to them, that hereby he might teach them humility, which he presses upon them from his own example, who was their Master and Lord; and if he condescended to so vile and abject a piece of service as to wash their feet, they ought much more to perform all duties of love and humble condescension one to another; and having shewed them their duty, he pronounces them happy and blessed if they practise it. From ver. 12 to 18.

2. As he had before made an exception in pronouncing them clean, ver. 10. so he expected not from all of them, that they would make themselves capable of that blessing which belongs to those that practise this duty of humility and condescension; for one of them, he intimates, would be so far from an humble serving of his fellow-disciples, that he would rise up against his Master. He further shews, that he knew what every one whom he had chosen to the apostleship would prove; and who would prove faithful, and who not. Neither need it seem strange, that he chose such a man to be one of his apostles, who he knew would prove a traitor; for hereby was fulfilled a prediction, in Ps. xli. 9. that one of his familiars and domestics should so recompense his kindness, as if a beast fed by his master should kick against him; for in Achitophel's treachery against David, was typified Judas's treachery against him. He also declares why he foretold them of this treachery beforehand, that when they saw it come to pass, they might be so far from stumbling at it, that on the contrary they might be encouraged thereby to believe on him, who by this prediction shewed himself God omniscient, and by his suffering these things, proved himself to be the true Messiah, of whom these things were fore-prophefied. And lest his apostles should suspect that for the treachery of one of them (which he had now intimated), he would abhor all the rest; therefore he declares, notwithstanding, that if they would go about and do his work faithfully, he would own them in it; and whosoever received them and their message, it should be accounted as if they received him, and the Father also. Then he plainly tells them (though with some trouble of spirit), that one of them there present should betray him.

During the entertainment above-mentioned, Judas Iscariot, yielding to the impulses of his insatiate avarice, arose from table, and hastened to the city of Jerusalem, having formed the abominable resolution of betraying his Master for the sake of the reward he should obtain from the rulers of Israel. He found the council assembled, and communicated to them his horrid purpose. They eagerly embraced his proposal, and agreed to pay him thirty shekels* of silver, on condition of his betraying the blessed Jesus into their power. Having engaged in this iniquitous contract with the chief priests, Judas resolved to avail himself of the first favourable opportunity of carrying his design into execution, at a time when our Lord was not attended by his numerous followers, that he might avoid fomenting a popular tumult. "Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver."

* Thirty staters, or shekels of the sanctuary, were equal to about three pounds fifteen shillings English money, which sum was the usual price paid for a slave; so that in the circumstance of conspiring against his life, the Jews evidently manifested their contempt for the Son of God.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS on JUDAS's *betraying* CHRIST.

Who is so fit to perform this act against Christ, as one of his own? There can be no treason, where there is not some trust. Who so fit among the domestics, as he that bare the bag, and dearly loved that which he bare? That heart which hath once enslaved itself to red and white earth, may be made any thing. Who can trust to the power of good means, when Judas, who heard Christ daily, whom others heard to preach Christ, daily; who daily saw Christ's miracles, and daily wrought miracles in Christ's name, is, at his best, a thief; and at length a traitor! That crafty and malignant spirit, which presided in that bloody council, hath easily found out a fit instrument for executing their hellish plot. As God knows, so Satan guesses, who are his; and will be sure to make use of his own. If Judas were Christ's domestic, yet he was Mammon's servant; he could not but hate that master whom he formerly professed to serve, while he really served that master which Christ professed to hate. He is but in his trade, while he is bartering even for his Master, "What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" Saidst thou not well, O Saviour, I have chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? thou that knewest to distinguish betwixt men and spirits, callest Judas by his right name. Behold, he is become a tempter to the worst of evils.

Wretched Judas, whether shall I more abhor thy treachery, or wonder at thy folly? What will they, what can they give thee, equivalent to that head which thou offerest to sale? were they able to pay, or thou capable to receive, all those precious metals that are laid up in the secret cabins of the whole earth, how was this price equal to the worth of him that made them! Had they been able to fetch down those glittering spangles of heaven, and to have put them into thy hand, what had that been to weigh with a God! How basely therefore dost thou speak of chaffering for him, whose the world was? "What will ye give me?" Alas, what were they, what had they, miserable men, to pay for such a purchase? The time was, when he that set thee on work could say, "All the kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of them are mine; and I give them to whom I please, all these I will give thee:" had he now made that offer to thee, in this woful bargain, it might have carried some colour of a temptation; and even thus, it had been a match ill made; but, for thee to make a trade of so invaluable a commodity, to these pelting petty chapmen, for thirty poor silverlings, it was no less base than wicked!

How unequal is this rate! Thou that valuedst Mary's ointment, which she bestowed upon the feet of Christ, at three hundred pieces of silver, sellest thy Master, on whom that precious odour was spent, for thirty! Worldly hearts are penny-wise, and pound-foolish; they know how to set high prices upon the worthless trash of this world; but as for heavenly things, or the God that owns them, these they shamefully undervalue.

"And I will deliver him unto you." False and presumptuous Judas! it was more than thou couldst do; thy price was not more too low, than thy undertaking was too high. Had all the powers of hell combined with thee, they could not have delivered thy Master into the hands of men. The act was none but his own; all that he did, all that he suffered, was perfectly voluntary. Had he pleased to resist, how easily had he with one breath blown thee and thy accomplices down into their proper hell! No thanks to thee, that he would be delivered. O Saviour, all our safety, all our comfort depends not so much upon thine act, as upon thy will; in vain should we have hoped for the benefit of a forced redemption.

The bargain is driven, the price paid. Judas returns, and looks no less smoothly upon his Master, and upon his former companions, than as if he had done no disservice. What cares he? his heart tells him he is rich; though it tells him at the same time he is false; he was not now first an hypocrite. The passover is at hand, no man is so busy to prepare for it, or more devoutly forward to receive it, than Judas.

Oh the sottishness and obduracy of this son of perdition! How many proofs had he formerly of his Master's omniscience! There was no day wherein he saw not that the thoughts, and things absent, came familiar under his cognisance: yet this miscreant dares plot

plot a secret villainy against his person, and face it: if he cannot be honest, yet he will be close. That he may be notoriously impudent, he shall know he is detected; while he thinks fit to conceal his treachery, our Saviour thinks not fit to conceal the knowledge of that treacherous conspiracy. "Verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." Who would not think but that discovered wickedness should be ashamed of itself! Did not Judas, think we, blush, and grow pale again; and cast down his guilty eyes, and turn away his troubled countenance at so galling an intimation? Custom of sin steels the brow, and makes it incapable of any relenting impressions. Could the other disciples have discerned change in any one of their faces, they had not been so sorrowfully affected with the charge. Methinks I see how intently they bent their eyes upon those of each other, as if they would have looked through those windows down into the bosom: with what self-confidence, with what mutual jealousy, they perused each other's foreheads! and now, as rather thinking fit to distrust their own innocence than their Master's assertion, each trembles in saying, "Lord, is it I?" It is possible there may lurk secret wickedness in some blind corner of the heart, which we know not of; it is possible that time and temptation, working upon our corruption, may at last draw us into some such sin as we could not believe before: whither may we not fall, if we be left to our own strength! It is both wise and holy to fear the worst: "Lord, is it I?"

In the mean time, how fair hath Judas, all this while, carried it with his companions! Had his former life discovered any falsehood or misdemeanour, they had soon found where to pitch their just suspicion: now Judas passes for so honest a man, that every disciple is rather ready to suspect himself, than him; it is true he was a thief; but who knows that besides his Maker? The outsides of men are no less deceitful than their hearts; it is not more unsafe to judge by outward appearances, than it is uncharitable not to judge so, in certain cases.

Oh the head-strong resolutions of wickedness, not to be checked by any opposition! Who would not but have thought, if the notice of an intended evil could not have prevented it, yet that the threats of judgment should have affrighted the boldest offender! but nevertheless, Judas can sit by, and hear his Master say, "Woe be to the man by whom the Son of man is betrayed; it had been better for that man never to have been born," and is no more disconcerted than innocence itself; but thinks, 'What care I? I shall have the money, and escape the shame; the fact shall be close, the match gainful: it will be long before I get so much by my service; if I fare well for the present, I shall shift well enough for the future:' thus secretly, he claps up another bargain; he makes a covenant with death, and with hell an agreement: O Judas, didst thou ever hear aught but truth fall from the mouth of that thy divine Master? canst thou distrust the certainty of that dreadful menace of vengeance? how then durst thou persist in the purpose of so flagitious and damnable a villainy? Resolved sinners run on desperately in their wicked courses; and have so bent their eyes upon the profit or pleasure of their mischievous projects, that they will not see hell lie open before them in their way.

As if that shameless man meant to outbrave all accusations, and to outface his own heart, he dares ask too, "Master, is it I?" No disciple shall more zealously abominate that crime than he that fosters it in his bosom; whatever the Searcher of hearts knows concerning him, is locked up in his own breast; to be perfidious is nothing, so he may be secret: his Master knows him for a traitor, it is not long that he shall live to complain; his fellow disciples think him honest; all is well, while he is well esteemed. Reputation is the only care of false hearts, not truth in conduct, nor consciousness of merit; so they may seem fair to men, they care not how foul they are to God.

Had our Saviour only had this knowledge at the second hand, this boldness had been enough to make him suspect the credit of the best intelligence; and who could imagine that a guilty man dares thus browbeat a just accusation! Now, He, whose piercing and unfailing eyes see things as they are, not as they seem, can peremptorily convince the impudence of this hollow inquirer with a direct affirmation, "Thou hast said." Foolish traitor! couldst thou think that those bleared eyes of thine would endure the beams of the sun; or that counterfeit slip, the fire? Was it not sufficient for thee to be secretly vicious; but

but thou must presume to contend with an omniscient accuser? Hast thou yet enough? thou supposedst thy crime unknown; to men it was so: had thy Master been no more than man, it had been so to him; now his knowledge argues him divine; how then durst thou yet resolve to lift up thy hand against him, who knows thine offence, and can either prevent or revenge it? As yet the charge was private, either not heard, or not observed by thy companions; it shall be at first whispered to one, and at last known to all. Bashful and penitent sinners are fit to be concealed; shame becomes those who are shameless.

Curiosity and desire of knowledge is an old disease of human nature; besides, Peter's zeal would not let him dwell under the danger of so doubtful a charge, he cannot but sit on thorns, till he know the man; his signs ask what his voice dare not. What law requires all followers to be equally beloved? Why may not our favours be freely dispensed where we like best; without envy, without prejudice? None of Christ's disciples could complain of neglect; John is highest in grace. Blood, affection, zeal, diligence, have endeared him above his fellows; he that is dearest in respect, is next in place; in that form of side-fitting at table, he leaned on the bosom of Jesus. Where more love is, there may be more boldness; this secrecy and intireness privileges John to ask that safely which Peter might not without much inconvenience, and peril of a check. The beloved disciple well understands his silent language, and dares put Peter's thought into words: love shutteth out fear. O Saviour, the confidence of thy goodness emboldens us, so as not to shrink at any suit; thy love shed abroad in our hearts bids us ask that which, in a stranger, were no better than presumption. Once, when Peter asked thee a question concerning John; "What shall this man do?" he received a short and sharp answer; "What is that to thee?" Now, when John asks thee a question (seeming just as curious) at Peter's instance, "Who is it that betrays thee?" how justly soever thou mightest have returned him the same answer (since neither of their persons was any more concerned), yet thou condescendest to a mild and full (though secret) satisfaction. There was not so much difference in the men, as in the matter of the demand: no occasion was given to Peter of moving that question concerning John; the indefinite assertion of treason amongst the disciples was a most just occasion of moving John's question for Peter and himself. That which therefore was timorously demanded, is answered graciously; "He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it; and he gave the sop to Judas." How loth was our Saviour to name him, whom he was not unwilling to point out! All is here expressed by dumb signs; the hand speaks what the tongue would not. In the same language, wherein Peter asked the question of John, doth our Saviour shape an answer to John: what a beck demanded, is answered by a sop.

Blessed Saviour, I do not hear thee say; 'Look on whomsoever I frown, or, to whomsoever I offer a public affront, that is the man;' but, "To whomsoever I shall give a sop." Surely a by-stander would have this man deep in thy books, and would have construed this act, as they did thy tears for Lazarus; see how he loves him! To carve for a man out of thine own dish, what could it argue but a singularity of respect! Yet, lo, there is but one whom thou hatest, one only traitor at thy board; and thou givest him a sop. The outward gifts of God are not therefore always the proofs of his love: yea, sometimes are bestowed in displeasure. Had he not been a wise disciple, he would have envied the great favour done to Judas, and have repented the slight put upon himself. So foolish are they, who, measuring God's affection by temporal benefits, are ready to applaud prosperous wickedness, and grudge outward blessings to persons incapable of enjoying better.

When Judas was gone out, our Saviour comforts himself against his approaching death, in that he should shortly be glorified in accomplishing the great work of man's redemption; and God should be glorified in him, and in his obedience and sufferings [See ch. xii. 13], and God himself would glorify him, and raise him from the dead, and exalt him to more power and dignity by reason of this his humiliation, and that straitway. He further intimates, that he was shortly to depart from them in respect of his bodily presence; and as he said to the Jews, ch. vii. 34, and viii. 21, so he now said to them, "Though

they

they should seek him, they were not able to come to him whither he went," namely, to heaven, as they were accustomed on earth to follow him, and find him out when they missed him. And having mentioned his departure from them, he gives them a strict charge, that in his absence they should "love one another," which he calls a "New Commandment," because, though it was an old precept as to the substance of it (as may appear from Lev. xix. 18. Matt. xxii. 39. 2 John v.); yet he now renewed it, and urged it upon a new ground, and after a new pattern and example: for the command now runs not only, as formerly, "Love your neighbour as yourself," but, "as I have loved you." And he appoints this mutual love to be the badge whereby his followers may be discerned from others. From ver. 31 to 36.

Simon Peter, reflecting on what our Saviour had lately said, ver. 33. "Whither I go ye cannot come," desires to know of him, whither he went? Christ tells him, that for the present he could not follow him, but should hereafter. He was not as yet strong enough to suffer for him, and so to follow him in that path to glory, as he should do afterwards. Peter, grieved at this, rashly proffers to follow him, "though he should lay down his life" for his sake. Christ advises him not to be over-confident of his own strength in standing for him; for he should deny him thrice within the "time of cock-crowing," that is, before the morning watch, or second cock-crowing.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHIEF PRIESTS, &c. CONSPIRE AGAINST CHRIST. HE INSTRUCTS AND COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES, BEFORE HE WENT TO THE PASSOVER. WHAT OUR SAVIOUR DID, AND ENJOINS A COMMEMORATION OF, AT THE FEAST. JEWISH METHOD OF CELEBRATING THE PASSOVER. CHRIST'S ADDRESS TO PETER. CHRIST'S LAST EXHORTATIONS AND DECLARATIONS TO HIS DISCIPLES. PRAYER TO HIS FATHER. CHRIST RETIRES TO THE GARDEN AT GETHSEMANE, AND HIS AGONY THERE. HE IS APPREHENDED BY THE TRAITOR JUDAS, BOUND, AND LED TO CAIAPHAS, WHO EXAMINES HIM. PETER DENIES HIS MASTER. CHRIST'S ARRAIGNMENT BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM. HE IS BROUGHT BEFORE PILATE, WHO ALSO EXAMINES HIM; AND IS AFTERWARDS CARRIED BEFORE HEROD. HE IS MOCKED, DERIDED, AND SCOURGED. AWFUL DEATH OF JUDAS. CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST.

THE chief priests, scribes, and elders of the people, now assemble together in Caiaphas's palace, and consult how they might, by some subtle and crafty method, take Jesus, and put him to death. This was the second council which they had held for the purpose of taking and murdering him: yet they thought it not convenient it should be done at this great solemnity, for fear of an uproar among the people, who they saw favoured him. But Judas, coming to them while they were thus consulting, undertakes to deliver him to them, quietly enough, notwithstanding the festival, when the multitude should be absent; for he knew whither he used to go and retire himself, and so had more opportunity than another to betray him. They thereupon bargain to give him "thirty pieces of silver," by which we are to understand the staters or shekels of the sanctuary, every one of them being as much in value as two shillings and sixpence of our money; by which reckoning those thirty pieces of silver amounted to the sum of three pounds fifteen shillings.

It may justly be wondered at, that these men should offer him so little (who no doubt were ready to have given much more, if it had been demanded and insisted on), and that Judas should accept so mean a reward to accomplish so great a wickedness: but this was done by the over-ruling providence of God, that that scripture might be fulfilled, Zech. xi. 12. where it is typically foretold by the prophet (speaking in the person of Christ), that he should be esteemed at a vile and base price, even at thirty pieces of silver. And now Judas, having on these terms agreed with them, returns to his Master at Bethany again.

The time of the passover being now at hand (it being the very day before that evening in which it was to be celebrated according to the law), our Saviour sends Peter and John

to Jerusalem, to prepare things necessary in order thereto. He tells them, that when they came into the city, there should meet them a man carrying a pitcher of water, by following whom they should find a guest-chamber ready furnished by the master of the house, whose heart, by his divine power, should be so inclined as to be willing and forward to accommodate them on this occasion. The disciples, being directed by this special token, go to the city, and find all things succeeded as he had foretold them; and, having taken care to provide for those things that were necessary for the celebration of the Paschal supper, return to their Master to acquaint him therewith.

Jesus, being now ready to go with his disciples to eat the passover, addresses himself to comfort them against the sorrow and grief they had conceived on the prospect of his approaching departure from them, exhorting them to exercise faith, and to trust in God, and in him as true God equal with the Father, and giving them many cordials and grounds of consolation to encourage and support them. John xiv. 1.

1. He tells them, that heaven, to which he was going, was his Father's house, and was designed not for him alone to be happy in, but for many more, through him, who there should have glorious mansions, and a perpetual rest and abode. If it were not so, he assures them he would not deceive them with vain hopes; therefore his departure from them was for their good, namely, to prepare a place for them. Ver. 2.

2. He promises to return again, and to receive and admit them into those heavenly mansions; which promise he would make good partly at the day of their particular death, and consummately and perfectly at the day of judgment. Ver. 3.

3. He tells them, that they had long ago heard from him whither he was to go, namely, to his Father, and to his heavenly kingdom; and they had heard the way in which he was to go thither, namely, by his passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. See John vi. 62. Luke xxiv. 26. Thomas, dreaming still, as it seems, that he should be a temporal king, and hearing him say, that "in his Father's house there were many mansions," and that "he went to prepare a place for them," supposed he spake of some earthly palace or castle he was going to; and therefore tells him, that they neither knew the place whither he was going, nor the way thither. Our Saviour replies, that if they intended to follow him, and be with him in his Father's kingdom, he himself was the only way thither; the true and living way; neither was there any access to the Father, nor reconciliation with him, but in, by, and through him; he being the Way by his Person, the Truth by his Doctrine, the Life by his Spirit, ver. 4, 5, 6. He further shews, that he being one in essence with the Father, and the express image of his person, Heb. i. 3. if they did well and thoroughly know him, and his divine nature, and how he came in his Father's name to reveal his will to them, and did well observe those divine excellencies that shone in him, even the same that are in the Father, they might know the Father also, who being invisible, is no otherwise to be known but as he is revealed in his Son; and although they never saw the Father, yet having seen and known his Son, who is his image, they have both seen and known the Father also: for no man hath seen, or can see the Father in his essence; but he that hath seen his Son, and observed his divine wisdom, power, goodness, and mercy, hath seen the image and lively representation of the Father, ver. 7. Philip, not considering well, as it seems, the sense of our Saviour's words, desires him to shew them the Father, that is, to shew him to them as he was revealed to the prophets of old, by giving them a visible representation of his glory, ver. 8. Christ reprehends him, because notwithstanding his long converse among them, he should know him no better. He tells him, that he who hath seen him, and heard his doctrine, hath seen his Father, and known his will: and they that know him, as they ought, cannot be ignorant of the Father, ver. 9. for he was one in essence with the Father, and one in operations. His word was the Father's, as well as his, for the Father spake by him; and his works were wrought not only by himself, but by the Father also; all external works being common to the whole Trinity, by reason of the unity of essence, ver. 10. He exhorts them to believe this truth of his oneness in essence with the Father; and if the infallibility of his words could not prevail with them, he urges that the excellency of his works and miracles, which they had

had seen him do (works exceeding all created power), might persuade them to believe it. Ver. 11.

4. He exhorts them not to be offended at his passion; forasmuch as the power of working miracles should, after his ascension, be more fully given to them, whereby it should appear that though he suffered in his flesh, and assumed humanity, yet he was also truly God, who alone could give such power to men: and therefore he tells them, that through faith in him they should, after his departure, do the works that he did [See Mark xvi. 17, 18.] nay, greater than some that he did in the days of his flesh, upon his sending down the Holy Ghost upon them: as particularly they should speak with strange tongues: they should also wonderfully convert the Gentiles, and by their doctrine and miracles bring down idols, and set up his kingdom through the world; they should give the Holy Ghost by laying on of hands, &c. and should do many more miracles than he had done, being themselves many, and having more time to do them in, ver. 12.

5. He promises them, that whatsoever they shall ask in his name, agreeable to his will, and necessary for their own salvation, or the execution of their office (relying upon his promises and merits and mediation), he would do it for them, that hereby the Father might be glorified in him, as working in and with him, by reason of the unity of essence. Ver. 13, 14.

6. He tells them, that if they would prove their love to him by obedience (and not by heartless dejection for his absence), he would send the Comforter, even the Holy Ghost unto them, to supply his bodily absence; not that formerly they were wholly destitute of the Spirit, but that now they should receive his gifts and graces in more ample measure. And this blessed Spirit should not only comfort and strengthen them, but also suggest to them, how they should defend themselves in time of persecution, Luke xii. 11, 12. and how they should call upon the Father in their necessities, Rom. viii. 26, 27. and should remain with them, without ever departing from them, as he, in respect of his corporal presence, should do for a time. This Spirit he calls the Spirit of Truth, because he reveals, teaches, and seals the truth of saving doctrine in the hearts of believers, whose blessed operations worldly men, who are yet in the state of nature, and unregenerate, neither know nor feel; but they, his apostles, having knowledge of him by those blessed operations he hath wrought in their hearts, their knowledge of him and communion with him should be increased, and he should abide in their hearts to instruct, comfort, and strengthen them, ver. 15, 16, 17.

7. He tells them, he will not leave them like orphans, who have no one to take care of them, but will come again to them, after his resurrection, shewing himself to them, to confirm their faith. As for the world, it is but a few hours more, he further tells them, that they should see him, but he should quickly rise from death, and appear to them his disciples again. And having once, as the Head of believers, overcome death by his resurrection, and obtained the fulness of the Spirit by his ascension to heaven, he would not only continue, and increase the spiritual life in them (which is the beginning of eternal life), but also raise their bodies at the last day to a glorious immortality. And when they shall have received the Holy Ghost, then they shall more perfectly understand the essential union between him and his Father, and the mystical union between him and his members. Ver. 18, 19, 20.

8. He declares, that if they will evidence their love to him, by keeping his commandments, they shall be beloved of the Father and himself, and, in testimony thereof, he will manifest himself to them, and lift up the light of his countenance upon them, and increase his graces and comforts in them, ver. 21. Judas the brother of James, still expecting he should shew himself as a temporal king, and have such a kingdom as should be conspicuous to all the world, desires to be informed how he would manifest himself to them, and not to the world, seeing it would be hard for him to shew himself to his own, and the world not see him. Our Saviour answers, the reason is, because the world would not obey him: but such as did obey his precepts, would therein express their love to him, and the Father would love them, and he and the Father would reveal themselves to them, and delight to dwell in them; but such as do not obey him, nor observe his precepts, declare that

that they have no love to him, and this is an heinous sin, seeing the word they despise is the Father's as well as his. Ver. 22, 23, 24.

9. That however he had, during his presence with them, taught them all things necessary (though as yet they continued in some measure ignorant, and his doctrine seemed dark to them, as appears by the many questions they had lately started), yet the Holy Ghost, whom the Father would send in his name, should effectually and clearly teach them all things, and bring to their remembrance what he had spoken, and should explain those things more fully and distinctly, which he had delivered summarily as they were able to bear them. Ver. 25, 26.

10. For a farewell, he not only wishes peace to them, as men use to do, but effectually bestows his grace, and leaves his peace and blessing with them, charging them not to be afraid, seeing he promises them help from above, with the assistance of his Spirit.

11. In conclusion he tells them, that they ought to entertain the news of his departure with joy, if they loved him as they ought, because he went to the Father, who is greater than He (not as he is God, but as he is Man and Mediator), and therefore his exaltation out of his present state of humiliation into glory with the Father should make them rejoice, especially considering that it tended so greatly to their advantage. He had beforehand declared to them, that he was, by the way of death, and resurrection therefrom, to go to the Father, and had shewed them the great good which his departure out of the world would produce; to the end that, when they perceived these things to fall out accordingly, their faith in him might be confirmed. He further intimates, he was not to speak much after this to them, being presently to enter the lists with Satan, according as his Father had appointed; and he was willing to meet his adversary, and to suffer the death he would bring upon him, not because Satan had any power over him, or any ground of challenge against him (being without sin), but that he might testify his love and obedience to his Father, who laid that duty upon him. Then arising, he proceeds with them to Jerusalem.

This evening, being the evening of the fourteenth day of the first month, and the time appointed by the law for celebrating the passover [See Exod. xii. 6, 18.], our Saviour comes with his company to the place prepared for him to eat the passover. That he did not anticipate the time, but kept the right day appointed in the law, we are not to doubt, considering the strict command for celebrating it at that very time, Exod. xiii. 10. and his coming to fulfil all righteousness, and to keep the law both moral and Levitical. But the Jews, it seems, at this time did not eat the passover till next day * at evening, viz. twenty-four hours after, as may appear from John xix. 14. where the day whereon Christ suffered is called the preparation of the passover †; and John xviii. 28. it is said, that the Jews would not enter into the Judgment-Hall, lest they should be defiled, and so rendered unfit to eat the passover. Now the reason hereof, as is conceived, was a custom which they had received by ancient tradition, that whenever any extraordinary or yearly festival-fabbath fell on the day immediately preceding an ordinary weekly fabbath, they should put off the festival to the fabbath following, that so they might not be forced to keep two fabbaths together: so that the first day of the feast of the Passover (which, with the last

* For this opinion, that our Saviour kept his last passover a day before the Jews kept theirs; see Dr. Cudworth's learned discourse concerning the true notion of the Lord's Supper, page 35, &c. *Statuimus Christum celebrasse Pascha feriâ quintâ ex Lege Mosaicâ: Judæos autem feriâ sextâ: cujus diversitatis causam adduximus dissertatione de tempore passionis Dominicæ, Thesi. xix. Ger. Vossius Harm. Evan. pag. 107.*

† The other seven days following the fourteenth of Nisan, were in strictness of speech a distinct feast, called "the Feast of unleavened bread," because in that space of time no leavened bread was to be in their houses. Their degrees of preparation to this feast were four. 1. *Expurgatio fermenti*, the cleansing of their household-stuff and vessels unto which leaven might possibly cleave; and this was done two or three days before the passover. 2. *Inquisitio fermenti*, the searching after leaven throughout all the rooms of their houses, even to the very mouse-holes: this they did with a waxen candle, and upon the night before the passover, as Buxtorfius observes: or, as Scaliger delivers it, from the beginning of the fourteenth day, until the fourth hour after the rising of the sun. 3. *Exterminatio aut conflagratio fermenti*, a burning of the leaven; and this was done from the fourth hour to the sixth about dinner-time. At which time followed the last degree (which Scaliger had omitted) viz. *Execratio fermenti*, the cursing of the leaven in this form: 'Let all that leaven, or whatsoever leavened thing is in my power, whether it were seen of me, or not seen, let it all be scattered, destroyed, and accounted as the dust of the earth!' See Buxtorf. *Synag.-c. xii.*

of the seven days of the feast, was an holy convocation, Numb. xxviii. 16, 17, 18, 25.) falling this year upon the day immediately preceding the weekly sabbath of the Jews, it seems, deferred the eating of the passover to the next evening, viz. the evening of the fifteenth day, and so conjoined the feast with the ordinary sabbath following: for which cause, as some think, it was called an high-day, John xix. 31. by reason of the conjunction of two festivals: but our Saviour not heeding their traditions, punctually observed the day instituted by God. Being therefore come with his apostles to the place prepared for him, and being set down, he tells them that he had earnestly desired to eat this passover with them before he suffered; for this was the last he should eat with them until their communion, which this feast represented, should be more fully completed in heaven, Luke xxii. 16. Then he took the first cup of wine that was to be drunk at that meal, and "giving thanks, drank of it, and gave it to them, and bade them divide it among them;" adding, that he would not henceforth, after this solemn feast, drink any more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when he should drink it new with them in his Father's kingdom, that is, till they should meet in heaven, and partake together of those joys which are usually expressed figuratively by new wine, and till he should drink other manner of wine with them in heavenly glory than this was, namely, the wine of refreshing endless joys and ravishing delights, Pf. xvi. 11.

2. He makes known to them, that there was one now at table that did eat in the same mess with him, who had designed his death, according to that prophecy, Pf. xli. 9. At this, his disciples were much startled and troubled, and asked who it was? He tells them, that He, the Son of man, was ready to go and suffer that death which God had determined to permit the malice of men to bring upon him; but denounces a dreadful woe to that man who should be the instrument thereof.

3. Then they ate the Paschal Lamb after its rite; at the conclusion of which he institutes the sacrament of the Eucharist, after this manner: "taking bread, and giving thanks, he brake it, and gave it to the disciples to take and eat, saying, This is my body," which is now shortly to be given and broken for you; "do this in remembrance of me;" plainly intimating, that this taking and eating was instituted by him as a holy rite of announcing and commemorating his death, and a means of making all worthy receivers partakers of the benefits thereof. In like manner, "after they had done eating, he took the cup, and having given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. For this cup is the New Testament in my blood which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins;" that is, the wine in this cup signifies my blood now shortly to be shed, by which the New Covenant (in which God promises remission of sins and eternal life to all who repent of their sins, and believe in his Son) is sealed and ratified. Now for the clearer understanding the original institution of this sacrament, it will not be amiss here to insert a short description of the method and order of the Paschal Supper, with the principal rites thereto belonging, which were then (either all or most of them, it seems) in use among the Jews, as they are delivered to us by their own writers, much after this manner, consisting in three or four several cups, and drinkings of wine, and two breakings of bread.

1. When all things appertaining to the feast were prepared, and all persons who belonged to that company ready; the chief man of the company (who was as it were the priest among them, and performed every thing belonging to this religious solemnity) takes a cup of wine, and blesses it in some such words as these: "Blessed be thou, O Lord, who hast created the fruit of the vine, and blessed be thou for this good day, and this holy convocation, which thou hast given us for joy and rejoicing," &c. Compare with this custom our Saviour's words, Luke xxii. 17. "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among you."

2. The table was then furnished with provisions of several sorts, viz. bitter herbs, unleavened bread, the body of the paschal lamb roasted whole, and so brought up: the latter Jews added, it seems, of their own heads, a dish of thick sauce called charoseth, made of dates, figs, raisins, and vinegar, mingled together (which was not commanded

in the law), as a memorial to them of the clay in which their fathers laboured in the land of Egypt.

3. The chief man of the company takes the four herbs, and blesses them in some such words as these; "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who createst the fruits of the earth," &c. and he eats thereof the quantity of an olive, and distributes to the rest; uttering some such sentence as this; "These bitter herbs we eat in token that the Egyptians made the lives of our fathers bitter in Egypt."

4. Then he takes a dish or charger, which held the unleavened bread or cakes, and (laying by a piece of the unleavened cake to be eaten afterwards with the paschal lamb at the close of the supper) he blesses the bread in some such words as these: "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who bringest forth bread out of the earth," &c. Then he breaks it, and eats of it.

5. When this is finished, he begins the second cup of wine, and the rest follow him. Then children used to be brought in, and were made to ask, "What is the reason this night differs so much from other nights?" instancing in many particulars of the festival solemnities. Then the master of the feast begins a narrative or discourse how they were all servants in Egypt, and as that night God redeemed them, &c. And tells particularly of the wonders done in Egypt, and the manner of their deliverance, and of God's various and admirable goodness towards them, saying to this purpose: "This is the passover which we eat, because the Lord passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt; therefore we are bound to give thanks, to praise, to laud, to glorify, to extol and magnify him that hath done for our fathers, and for us, all these wonders; who hath brought us from bondage to freedom, from sorrow to rejoicing, from darkness to a great light, from affliction to redemption: therefore ought we to say Hallelujah, praise him, ye servants of the Lord," &c. This kind of declaration or shewing forth the occasion of the passover, and God's wonderful goodness to them in their deliverance, they called Haggadah. Hence the apostle may be supposed to have borrowed his phrase; "As often as ye shall eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye declare or shew forth the Lord's death," 1 Cor. xi. 26. This annunciation of, or shewing forth to their children, the Lord's wonderful goodness and mercy, we find commanded, Exod. xii. 26, 27. and xiii. 8.

6. Then he takes that part of the unleavened cake which was laid aside before, and blessing it, and giving thanks for it as before, he distributes to every one a piece to eat with the paschal lamb, of which each person was bound to eat as much as the quantity of an olive at least.

The breaking of bread, therefore, at which our Saviour instituted the commemoration of his body, seems to be this second breaking of bread, viz. in time of supper, (for it is said, *ἐσθιόντων αὐτῶν*, as they were eating) or towards the end of the supper; for, after this, nothing more was to be eaten that night.

7. All this done, they drink up the third cup, called the cup of blessing, or thanksgiving after meat. Paul calls it by this very name, 1 Cor. x. 16. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" &c. And this third cup, which was after supper (that is, after they had done eating, and was the conclusion of the supper), was the cup, which, it seems, our Saviour applied to a new spiritual signification; and having instituted it into an Eucharistical cup, bade them drink "all of it:" so that he now ordains bread to be his body henceforward, in the same sense the paschal lamb had been his body before; and the cup to be the New Testament in his blood now, as the blood of bullocks had been the Old Testament in his blood before, Exod. xxiv. 8.

8. After this they sang the Hallel or Hymn. The Jews at their three great feasts, viz. of unleavened bread, of weeks or pentecost, and of Tabernacles, were wont to sing their great Hallel (as they called it), or at least some part of it, which contained those six Eucharistical Psalms, from the 113th to the 119th. Whether our Saviour and his disciples sang this particular Hallel, or some part of it; or some other, more immediately suited and accommodated to this occasion, we are not assured; but certain it is, that they sung a hymn after this paschal supper, before they departed: so that, if these rites were then in use among the Jews, it may from thence appear, that the bread and wine which our

Saviour

Saviour distributed at the last passover, and appointed to signify and represent his body and blood, were not wholly without the extent of the paschal supper, but within the compass of it, and rites belonging to it; only applied by him now to a new evangelical use and signification. And he dealt no otherwise in this sacrament, than he did before in that other of baptism, which he seems to have founded upon that old practised rite, among the Jews, of purification by water; so that our Saviour, by instituting both sacraments of the New Testament, seems to have taken the old rites of the Jews, to have ordained them to a new evangelical use and mystical signification; and so (as one observes) to have put a new superscription upon the old metal.

Christ now addresses his speech particularly to Peter (though the rest were concerned in what he spake, and tells him, that his time of trial was at hand; that Satan had desired he might have the shaking of him; but he had prayed for him, that though his faith were shaken, yet it should not be utterly overthrown by the temptation; and when he had by repentance recovered himself from that sad lapse, he should be the more careful to confirm and strengthen others, that they fall not in like manner. Peter, notwithstanding this warning, expresses a very great confidence of his own strength, and a readiness to suffer any thing for Christ. Our Saviour tells him, that before the second crowing of the cock this very night, that is, before the morning watch, he should deny him thrice.

Then he speaks unto them all together, telling them, that formerly he had sent them out to preach his gospel, giving them order not to make any provision for themselves, Matt. x. 9. Luke x. 4. and yet they wanted nothing, for he did then extraordinarily provide for them. But that commission was only temporary, and for that time only to be observed; whereas now they must expect to meet with many distresses and difficulties, and to grapple with many necessities and dangers, and therefore had need to be well prepared and armed against them, and provided with spiritual weapons (viz. faith, patience, and Christian courage) to make resistance, and therein to be exemplary to succeeding ministers, who are not to expect a miraculous supply in things temporal. And such distresses as these they shall see fall most sharply on himself first: for now, according to the prophecy of Isaiah liii. 12. he must be put to death as a malefactor, and all that was foretold of him must suddenly be accomplished and fulfilled. The apostles, thinking, according to the literal sound of his words, that he had commanded them to provide swords for themselves, (whereas he only expressed to them, by that figure, the distresses that were now approaching), told him, they had two swords among them; but he gave them by a short reply to understand, that he did not mean that they should go and provide them material swords, but that great dangers and distresses were now coming upon them, against which they ought to be fortified and prepared.

Before their departure from the place, where they ate the passover, our Saviour seems to have given those his farewell exhortations to his apostles, which we find recorded in the 15th and 16th chapters of John. In the former of which he treats of three things:

1. On occasion of seeing a vine, as is probable from the window of the room, he compares himself to a vine, being the vine-stock into which the branches are ingrafted; his Father to an Husbandman, in regard of his care about this Vine; professors of him to branches ingrafted into him, that they may fructify, ver. 1. That such as profess him only outwardly, being in him, and in the visible church, by external and visible communion only, and do not believe in him from the heart, nor bring forth the fruits of holiness in their lives, his Father takes away and prunes off, sometimes by discovering their hypocrisy and unsoundness in this life; sometimes by a just seclusion from church-society. However, at last he will finally take them off from any hopes of having benefit by him, the only Saviour of mankind: but such as are fruitful, he purges by his word and Spirit, as also by crosses and afflictions, that they may be more fruitful, ver. 2. And as for them his apostles, to whom he spake, he tells them, they were already clean, that is, justified, and sanctified (in part) by the operation of his doctrine and Spirit in them; yet they needed further pruning and purging, in order to a greater degree of fruitfulness,

ver.

ver. 3. And having assured them of their good state, he exhorts them stedfastly to adhere to him by faith and love, and an holy dependence, and so to abide in him, and he will abide in them by the influences and gracious operations of his holy Spirit, and will more and more impart unto them the sap of spiritual life, to enable them to be fruitful; for as branches divided from the vine cannot live, nor bear fruit, so they, separated from him, and without his aid and assistance, and drawing virtue from him, could not do any thing truly good and pleasing to God. Therefore those professors, who are only in him by an outward and visible profession, but do not abide in him by a real and fiducial adherence to him, nor draw virtue from him to make them fruitful, he shews, will prove at last like withered branches that are fit for nothing but the fire, ver. 4, 5, 6.

2. He exhorts them to an obedient observance of his commands, and particularly of loving one another. He shews them, that if they abide in him, and his doctrine and commands abide in their hearts, whatever they ask according to the will of God, and conducing to his glory, shall be granted them, ver. 7. and by this their fruitfulness and obedience they would much honour and glorify God, and prove themselves to be his disciples indeed, ver. 8. He tells them, that his love to them is like that of his Father's to him, and that should oblige them to do those things which are pleasing to him, that he may continue to love them, ver. 9. and that will be best secured by their constant obedience to his commands, as his obedience to his Father's commands had secured to him continuance in his Father's love, ver. 10. He further declares, that his aim in all this was, that by their communion with himself, and their fruitfulness flowing therefrom, the joy and comfort they had conceived in him their mediator and redeemer might in his absence continue to them, and, by the addition of that comfort of the Spirit (which they should have when he was gone), their joy might abound, ver. 11. Then he presseth particularly the duty of mutual love, as a means to evidence the reality of their fruitfulness, and that from his own example [see chap. xiii. 34.] and this his love he commends from several evidences thereof, whereof the first is, his readiness to lay down his life for them, which is the greatest evidence of love that a man can possibly express to his dearest friend; yet he was willing to do even this for them: and now they would approve themselves to be his friends, if they continued obedient to his doctrine and commands, ver. 12, 13, 14. A second evidence of his love, was, that though they were indeed his servants, yet he did not deal with them as mere servants, but as friends; and had, before he suffered, communicated his counsels to them, and acquainted them with all that the Father had commanded him to teach and reveal unto men for their salvation, ver. 15. A third evidence was this, that his mercy had prevented them in their election unto salvation; and in their effectual calling, as the effect thereof; yea, and in their calling to the office of the apostleship: and being thus freely chosen by him, he had appointed them to bring forth much and remaining fruit (viz. many converts to God), by their private endeavours, and publick ministry. And for any thing they needed to enable them to be further fruitful, they should have access to the Father through him for obtaining thereof, ver. 16. Lastly, having thus commended his love to them, not only as an obligation to mutual love, but as a pattern of it, he repeats and resumes his former exhortation, and presses it again upon them, as the most eminent return he expected from them, ver. 17.

3. He comforts them against the hatred of the world (which they must expect to meet with), by many arguments:

1. Because he himself had met with no better usage from it; so that therein they might comfort themselves, that in their sufferings they had fellowship with him, who was hated of the world, before they were, ver. 18.

2. Because the ground of the world's hatred against them, was, that they were not wicked like itself, but chosen out of the world unto holiness, ver. 19.

3. Because they suffered for their relation to him (as servants to such a master), and it was not reasonable they should expect to be better treated than he was, either as to their persons or ministry, nor that they should think the world should more receive their doctrine, than they did his, ver. 20.

4. The

4. The goodness of the cause for which they should suffer might comfort them, as being for his name's sake. And the reason of the world's violent hatred against him, was, that being blinded with ambition, and carnal affections, they neither knew nor minded the Father who sent him, and consequently were ignorant of the glorious contrivance of man's redemption, ver. 21. And however their ignorance might seem to plead for them, yet it was very inexcusable, considering the doctrine he had preached (viz. that the Father had sent him), and had confirmed it by the testimonies and predictions of the prophets, and by the miracles he wrought among them. Without these demonstrations, they might indeed have been ignorant of the Father who sent him, but now they had no cloak for their sin, ver. 22. And he having done so much to evidence his being sent from God, the hating and opposing him was a malicious resisting of his Father also, who is one in essence with him, and sent him into the world to reconcile sinners to himself, ver. 23. And the great miracles that he wrought, might sufficiently have convinced them that he came from God, seeing no wicked man (such as they supposed him to be) could do those things that he had done, which they had seen with their eyes, and yet hated both him and his Father; for their enmity to him reflected upon his Father also, ver. 24. But this is no more than was foretold in Ps. xxxv. 19. which though it had its own completion in David as a type, yet it related also to him in whom it was to have a more eminent accomplishment, ver. 25.

Lastly, he tells them, that though he had been the subject of many aspersions cast on him by the world, yet all these should be done away by the coming of the holy Spirit, who should testify of him, and make his person and doctrine to be acknowledged in the world. And they themselves should bear witness of him, who had been with him since he began to exercise his prophetic office [see Act. i. 21]. And the Spirit, being once poured out upon them, should enable and assist them therein, not only by his extraordinary work upon themselves, and the miraculous works that should accompany their doctrine, but also by accompanying their testimony with conviction upon many, and by inwardly sealing the truth of his doctrine upon the hearts of believers, ver. 26, 27.

In the 16th chapter, our Saviour goes on with, and at last concludes his farewell sermon. The chapter may be divided into these parts:

I. He intimates the reason why he had spoken so much to them of the hatred, hard usage, and sufferings they were like to meet with from the world; namely, not to fill them with sorrow, but that they might not be offended, discouraged, or scandalized at them, when they came, ver. 1. He instances in two particular sufferings they were to expect; namely, excommunication out of the Jewish synagogues, and exclusion from the communion of the worship of God, as also martyrdom, ver. 2. He shews the cause and ground of wicked men's hatred and malice against them, is, their ignorance of the Father and him, ver. 3. He tells them it was needful they should be forewarned of these approaching troubles, that, when they came, they might remember that he, as God Omniscient, had foretold them of them, and would not fail to support them under them. And though he had before told them, in general, of many persecutions and troubles they must expect to meet with, when he gave them their first commission, Matt. x. 17. yet now (as at ver. 2.) he gave them a more particular and distinct intimation of the kinds and degrees of those sufferings they must look for, than he had done any time before. And what he formerly foretold as at a distance, he now foretells as what they were shortly after his removal to be tried and exercised with. He did not therefore at first so expressly tell them of these things which they must suffer, but considered their weakness: for while he was with them, the rage of adversaries (as they saw) fell principally upon him, letting them alone; but after his ascension, when the malice of Satan and wicked men could not reach him, it would fall upon them, and such others as believed in him, ver. 4.

II. He again intimates his speedy departure from them, and reprehends them for being so grieved at it: particularly that they neglected to ask him concerning it, and the end of it, and the benefit that might redound to them. Indeed Peter asked him whither he went, John xiii. 36. but it seems he did it as apprehending he would go into some remote country out of the reach of the Jews, and there begin and set up a temporal kingdom. But they

they now, hearing he would suddenly depart from them, and go to his Father that sent him, should have been instant with him to know what he meant thereby, and to what end and purpose he would leave them, and what benefit they might expect therefrom, that so he might have taken occasion thereby more fully to instruct them concerning all these things, ver. 5, 6. He urges them to submit to his departure, as that which would make way for his sending the Comforter to them; for to give the Spirit in a large and abundant measure, was more proper for his reinstalment in glory, after he had by his resurrection and ascension triumphed over death, hell, and sin, and was seated at the right hand of God. To which that place may be accommodated, John vii. 39. "The Holy Ghost was not yet given" (namely, with his abundant and wonderful gifts and operations), "because that Jesus was not yet glorified," ver. 7. He shews them the advantages that will redound upon the coming of the Holy Ghost, 1. To the World. 2. To the Apostles. 3. To Himself.

1. To the World. He shall convince the world of three things. 1. Of sin, for their rejecting and not believing in Christ, whom he shall plainly demonstrate and prove to be the Son of God, the great Prophet [Deut. xviii. 18, 19], and the true Messiah. 2. Of righteousness, that is, Christ's righteousness; for he shall make it manifest, that Christ remained not in the grave, but rose again, and ascended, and is accepted of the Father, and liveth with him in glory and majesty; from whence it must necessarily follow, that he was a righteous person, and had fulfilled all righteousness, and done and suffered whatever was required of him for the working and accomplishing of man's redemption. And therefore it is his righteousness by which alone we are to expect acceptance with God. 3. Of judgment, that is, he shall convince the world, that Jesus is both Lord and Christ, as in Acts xii. 36. and that all power and judgment is committed to him, which is evidenced by his judging of Satan, the prince of the world (over whom he triumphed on the cross, Col. ii. 15), and by his casting down his kingdom of darkness and wickedness, John xii. 31.

2. To the apostles, to whom he had spoken many things summarily, on which he was ready to enlarge, but their present incapacity, weakness, and sorrow hindered him. He therefore undertakes that the Spirit should supply this, by enlightening their understandings, and by explaining and enlarging these things more distinctly: and he, being the Spirit of truth, should guide them into all truth necessary for them to know in order to their salvation, and should teach them the full of his Father's will, for laying aside the ceremonial external law of the Jews, and freeing all Christians from that yoke, &c. And the doctrine he should deliver is not his only, but delivered by him from the Father and Son also. And he should shew them things to come, by being a Spirit of prophecy to them [see 1 Acts xiii. 1. Eph. iv. 11. Acts xxi. 10, 11.] ver. 12, 13.

3. To himself. For the Spirit shall glorify him by his testimony, gifts, and miracles, and, being sent from the Father by the Son, shall in all things accord with him, and thereby evidence that he hath his message from him, and that he communicates nothing to them but what he received from him, ver. 14. Yet in saying this, he doth not intend so to appropriate it to himself, as to exclude his Father; for all things are so the Father's, as they are his, by reason of the unity of essence; therefore he might call these things his, which the Spirit should shew, as being communicated by the Spirit, from the Father and himself, ver. 15.

III. He comforts his disciples with a promise, that however he was now to be removed from them, yet they should shortly see him again, namely, after his resurrection; for it was not possible he should be held by death, but must arise and go to his Father, ver. 16. His disciples not understanding what he meant by those words, "A little while, and ye shall see me," &c. and being desirous to ask him, he prevents their inquiry by a further explanation of himself, telling them, that they shall indeed have a time of sad trouble and sorrow of heart (viz. during the time of his suffering and absence from them), when impiety and popular rage shall triumph; but their sadness should soon be turned to rejoicing, namely, when they shall see him alive again. As it is with a travailing woman, who soon forgets her sorrow after she hath brought forth a man-child; so shall it be with them,

them, when he shall see them again after his resurrection, and thereby exceedingly revive and cheer their hearts, Luke xxiv. 41. and no man shall be able to take this joy from them, because the ground and cause of it shall always remain, seeing he shall die no more; but, being gone to heaven to prepare a place for them, shall there ever live to make intercession for them. From ver. 16 to 23.

4. To mitigate their sorrow for his departure from them, he tells them, that in that day, when the Comforter shall come, they shall be greatly illuminated by him, and shall not be so puzzled and perplexed with doubts and scruples as now they were (which forced them to ask him so many questions), but should be more fully instructed concerning the mysteries of his death, resurrection, and ascension; so that they shall not need to ask him more questions about them, ver. 23. "In that day ye shall ask me nothing."

5. He further promises them, as a fruit of his ascension, a good return of all their petitions (which shall tend to the glory of God, and their good) made in his name and mediation. [See ch. xiv. 13, 14. and xv. 7.] ver. 23. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." He tells them, that though (as other believers in the Old Testament) they had respect in their prayers to the Messiah who was promised [Dan. ix. 17.], yet they had not hitherto learned to ground all their prayers to God upon his merit and intercession, as the only Mediator, nor had so distinctly made use of his mediatorial office in their addresses to God: but now he exhorts them to do it, and promises them, that whatsoever he had purchased of the Father by his blood, they should have, if they asked it. Hitherto they had been too sparing in asking: therefore he bids them ask now, that by receiving gracious answers to their prayers made in his name, their joy and comfort might increase more and more, ver. 24.

6. He tells them, that hitherto he had taught them many things in parables, that seemed dark and obscure to them, but now the time was approaching when he would by the Holy Ghost clearly enlighten their understandings concerning divine mysteries, and the things appertaining to the kingdom of God, and particularly in the knowledge of God as his Father, and their Father in him, ver. 25.

7. He urges them again, after his ascension, "to pray in his name:" and, to encourage them, he tells them they had not only his intercession (which they should be sure of), but the Father's love, upon which to ground their hope of audience; and that he was not to intercede for them with the Father as with an enemy, or as one unwilling to grant their petitions; for the Father loved them (and out of his love to them had appointed him their mediator), and loved them because they loved him, and believed that he came from God: not that their love to him prevented the Father's love to them; but the Father, having loved them, and brought them to love his Son, would reward this their love by a gracious readiness to hear their prayers, ver. 26, 27.

8. That he might further confirm them in what they believed concerning his coming from the Father, and explain what they understood not; at ver. 16. he declares to them, in brief, both the state of his humiliation and exaltation, John xvi. ver 28.

His apostles now profess, that he spake plainly, and without a parable; and seeing he had declared his omniscience by discerning their thoughts, and preventing them with his answer, when they had a desire to have asked him a question, ver 19. this had confirmed them in their belief of his deity, and had assured them that he had no need to be told by those that did not understand any of his words, that they did not understand them, for nothing was hid from him, ver. 29, 30.

9. Our Saviour, notwithstanding their present profession that he came from God (and that upon so solid a ground), yet, knowing how weak and infirm their faith was, tacitly warns them not to be over-confident; for their faith should be put upon a great trial very shortly; and then (though they now believe on him) they should be so far from confessing him, that they should forsake him, and flee from him to their own hiding places; however, his Father would still be with him, and would own him even in death itself, and raise him up from death to life, ver. 31, 32.

Lastly, He tells them, that all these things he had spoken unto them, that, trusting in him, they might have peace and quietness of mind, notwithstanding all the troubles that should

should come upon them; and, in conclusion, bids them be of good cheer, for he should by his death overcome whatsoever in the world was opposite to their salvation, and would enable all those who believe in him, and are united to him by faith, to overcome the world also, 1 John iv. 4. and ch. v. 5.

Christ, having ended this his consolatory and valedictory exhortation, then pours forth a most divine and heavenly prayer to the Father, wherein he supplicates for himself, his apostles, and all his members, and leaves us a pattern of his perpetual intercession in heaven as our great High Priest; and he delivers this prayer in the audience of his apostles, that he might assure them of his love, and that they should obtain what he prayed for, as also to teach them, by his example, what to ask for themselves.

In this prayer we may observe these four parts.

1. He prays for himself, that God would glorify him, by sustaining him in his approaching agony (that in it he might triumph over all his people's enemies), and by speedily raising him again to life, and exalting him to his right hand, that so by the preaching of his gospel, and spreading his spiritual kingdom in the world, he might also glorify his Father, whose glory shines in the glory of his Son; and his wisdom, justice, and mercy, are made more conspicuous by consummating the work of man's redemption by him, ver. 1. And as the Father had given him such full authority over all persons to order and dispose of them, that he might bring about the salvation of his elect, so he prays that he would glorify him in those particulars before-mentioned, that he may do what is committed to him, and be the author of eternal life unto those that are given unto him, ver. 2. And having mentioned eternal life, he declares (not to inform the Father, but his disciples, for whose edification he thus prayed in their audience) that the way, and means to come to it, and the very beginning of it, is a true knowledge of God, as the only true God, in opposition to idols; and of himself as the only mediator, being accompanied with a firm assiance in him, and with affections and actions suitable thereto [see Isa. liii. 11.] ver. 3. He further presses his petition, that because he had glorified his Father on earth by his doctrine, life, and miracles, and had finished all that was hitherto required of him, and was firmly resolved to go through with all that was yet behind, and to perform all things necessary for working the reconciliation and redemption of mankind (till he might say "It is finished," John xix. 30), that therefore he might be advanced and set at the right hand of the Father in the full enjoyment of the divine glory, which he had with him from eternity as the Lord of glory, John xii. 41. 1 Cor. ii. 8. and that his divine Majesty may now shine forth in his person as Mediator, which, in the time of his humiliation, had as it were been hid and obscured, ver. 4, 5.

2. He comes to pray for his apostles and disciples, whom he describes as those that were the Father's by eternal election, and committed to his care and trust; whom he had faithfully taught and revealed the Father unto; which teaching had so well succeeded, that they had embraced, and believed, and observed the Father's word and doctrine, and had acknowledged him to have received his authority, commission, and doctrine from the Father, and that he came from him, and was sent by him, ver. 6, 7, 8. He says, he prays for them, and not for the world: for they are his charge given him by the Father, who made them his by eternal election; but it was his work to make them more the Father's, by converting and dedicating them unto him: for as the Father gives all the elect to him, to redeem and convert them; so he, by conversion, and bringing them to believe in himself, makes them adopted children to the Father, and is glorified by their faith and works, ver. 9, 10. And he being shortly to depart out of the world in respect of his bodily presence, and his apostles being to abide for some time on earth, and to be subject to many infirmities and temptations, he prays the Father that he would keep them, in all their hazards and dangers, by his divine power, mercy, and goodness, for the honour of his holy name; that they may be one in faith and love towards one another, as the Father and He are one in essence and will, ver. 11. This petition he further presses, by urging, that while he was bodily present with them, he took care of them, and had kept them in his Father's name, by power communicated to him as Mediator from the

Father,

Father, and he had lost none: only Judas was gone away, who, though he was chosen to the apostleship, yet was one whose apostasy and ruin the scripture had foretold long ago, speaking of him under the type of Achitophel, and others of David's enemies [see Pl. lxix. 25. Acts i. 20. Pl. cix. 8.] ver. 12. And now being to go away from them in respect of his bodily presence, he would recommend them to the Father in their own audience, that so they might be encouraged to expect a performance of the suit put up for them by so powerful an intercessor; and that the joy, which his presence maintained among them, might be continued to them in his absence, by remembering what he had prayed for in their behalf, ver. 13. He further represents their case, that having taught them effectually the doctrine he had received from the Father, and thereby regenerated them, they had thereupon incurred the world's hatred, they being in judgment, affection, and conversation different from it; yet he desired not that they should in a short time be taken out of the world (seeing he must, after this, make use of their service), but that they might be kept from the seduction and snares and evils they might meet with in it, ver. 15, 16. He again repeats in their hearing, what he had before said, concerning their being separated (by the spirit of regeneration) from the world, and their inconformity to it; and how therein they resembled him their head, that so they might remember they were but strangers in the world, and ought to have their minds estranged from it, ver. 16. Again he petitions for them, that the Lord would confer on them more and more of the grace of sanctification, sanctifying them by his word of truth, as the means and instrument (which is his infallible truth, and will not deceive any who really entertain and embrace it), and so fit them for the great employment of preaching the gospel, to which he had devoted and consecrated them; for he had sent them into the world to take on them this office, as the Father had sent him (among other ends) to preach the gospel. And as they needed sanctification in respect of their calling, so he was willing to consecrate himself to the Lord a priest and a sacrifice, without spot, and now intended to offer up himself a sacrifice for sin, that they might, by the merit of this his sacrifice, obtain remission of sins, and the communication of his Spirit, and might be sanctified in truth, and regenerated to a true and permanent newness of heart and life, which was the fulfilling of what was shadowed and typified by the external cleansings under the law, ver. 17, 18, 19.

3. He shews that he prays not for the apostles only, but for all those who, to the end of the world, should by the word preached, either immediately by them, or mediately by other ministers, be converted and drawn to believe on him: and his suit for them is, that they may be preserved in unity among themselves, being first united by faith to him, and by him to the Father, that so their union may resemble in some sort that inexpressible union between the Father and him, who are one in nature and will; the Father being in the Son, and the Son in the Father [see Prov viii. 30.] And that the men of the world, being allured by the amiableness of this their union and concord, may be drawn to believe on him, as the only true Messiah sent of God, which, if there were divisions and dissensions among them, would be brought into question. And that they might be thus one, he had communicated to them the glory and dignity, to be the children of God, and his fellow-heirs [Rom. viii. 17.], that he, dwelling in them by the influence and power of his holy Spirit, as the Father doth in him by the fullness of his Godhead, and so making them one with himself, and with the Father through him, he might perfect their union among themselves, to the convincing of the world that he came from God, and that the Father loveth him, and all his, as one mystical body; and loveth all his members freely and immutably, as he loveth him, not in respect of equality, but by way of similitude and resemblance, ver. 20, 21, 22, 23.

Having thus prayed for their union among themselves, and with him, and the Father through him, he requests that they may one day come to be completely happy in a sight of his glory, decreed and appointed to him by his Father (who loved him with an eternal love), and that they may be glorified with him, when, all veils being laid aside, they shall be fitted for a more full fruition and enjoyment of him, ver. 24.

Lastly. Seeing the greatest part of the world lie in ignorance, and know not God savingly,

ly, namely, God in Christ, but through his revelation (who knew him perfectly), he had been revealed with good success unto his apostles; and his divine nature, attributes, and counsels had been declared unto them, and should be more and more after his ascension, by sending the Holy Ghost unto them; therefore he desires that the Father's love, wherewith he loved him, may be extended to them also, and a sense of it be infused into their hearts, and that he himself may ever dwell in them by his grace and holy Spirit, ver. 25, 26.

When he had ended this his divine prayer, he went with the eleven out of the city, over the brook Cedron, towards a garden adjoining to the mount of Olives, that he might there prepare himself for his passion now at hand; and that those who came to take him, might find him alone with his disciples in that private place, and so might take him without any tumult or uproar of the common people; which otherwise might have happened, if they had found him, and taken him in the city.

Judas, it seems, when they rose from supper, slipped away into the city, where he had his wicked instruments provided by the chief priests, for the cursed design they had contrived and agreed upon; and accordingly they made themselves ready to execute it. In the mean time our Saviour and his disciples were so employed as we have seen before: and going now along together towards the garden, he tells them, that by occasion of those things that should happen to him that night, they should every one of them be exceedingly offended, and so dismayed with fear and apprehension of danger, that they would all flee from him, and forsake him [see John xvi. 32.], and so that should come to pass which was spoken by the prophet Zachariah, ch. xiii. 7. that "the Shepherd would be smitten, and thereupon the sheep should be scattered," yet notwithstanding their dispersion, and flying away from him for fear, he would not leave them in it; but after his resurrection he intended to go into Galilee, where they should come to him. He also tells Peter again of his fall, which should happen that same night, and that he should not only be offended at his sufferings, as all the other disciples should be, but that he should flatly deny him, and that three several times in the space of cock-crowing, or before the morning-cock crow. But Peter, over-confident of his own strength, and being now armed with a sword, affirms very vehemently, that he would not do it, though he should die with him; and the other disciples, after his example, profess the same for themselves.

Christ with his disciples come now to Gethsemane, at the foot of mount Olivet, to a garden there; into which being entered, he leaves eight of them behind, and takes Peter, James, and John with him (who had seen the glory of his transfiguration, and so had least reason to take offence at his sufferings), and imparts to them the sorrows and anguish, the fears and sore amazement that now seized upon him, under a sense and feeling of God's wrath against the sins of men, which were laid upon him (by imputation) as their surety; and, charging them to watch and pray, he kneeled down at first (as Luke says, ch. xxii. 41); and after falling prostrate on his face, he prayed that (if it were possible, and agreeable to the will of God, and if man's redemption might be achieved without it), "this cup might pass from him," otherwise he was willing to drink it. His desiring the removal of the cup, was the effect of his humanity; *puræ humanitatis*; but his submitting to the will of God, was *puræ sanctitatis*, a proof of his divinity.

An angel from heaven is now sent to strengthen him, and possibly to represent such considerations to him of the advantages and benefits of his death and passion, as might make him willing to undergo it the more cheerfully, Luke xxii. 43.

Then he returns to his disciples, and finds them sleeping, which he reproves them for (and Peter particularly), saying, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour," but must give way to sleep at such a time as this, when your Lord and Master is under such extreme horror and anguish? He exhorts them again to watch and pray, that they enter not into temptation," nor be overcome thereby; for though "the spirit was willing, yet the flesh was weak."

He goes a second time, and prays more earnestly, and being in an agony and extreme anguish under the weight of God's wrath laid on him for the sins of men [Gal. iii. 13.



CHRIST' praying on the Mount of OLIVES.



Heb. v. 7, 8.] his sweat was, it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. Now was "the power of darkness" [Luke xxii. 53.] and of hell itself let loose against him as it never was against any person on earth either before or since. Now was the "serpent bruising his heel," Gen. iii. 15.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS on CHRIST'S Agony in the Garden.

What a preface do I find to my Saviour's passion! An hymn succeeded by an agony: a chearful hymn, and an agony no less sorrowful. An hymn begins; both to raise and testify the courageous resolutions of his suffering; an agony follows, to shew that he was truly sensible of those extremities wherewith he was resolved to grapple. All the disciples bore their part in that hymn; it was fit they should all see his comfortable and divine magnanimity, wherewith he entered into those sad lists; only three of them were allowed to be witnesses of his agony: only those three who had been the witnesses of his glorious transfiguration; that light had well fore-armed and prepared them for this. How could they be dismayed to see his trouble, who there saw his Majesty? how could they be dismayed to see his body now sweat, which they had then seen to shine? how could they be daunted to see him now accosted with Judas and his train, whom they then saw attended with Moses and Elias? how could they be discouraged to hear the reproaches of base men, when they had heard the voice of God to him from that excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased?"

Now, before these eyes, this sun begins to be overcast with clouds; "He began to be sorrowful and very heavy." Many sad thoughts for mankind had he secretly hatched, and yet smothered in his own breast; now his grief is too great to be suppressed; "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." O precious Saviour, what must thou needs feel, when thou saidst so! Feeble minds are apt to bemoan themselves on light occasions; but the grief must needs be violent that causes a strong heart to break forth into a passionate complaint. Woe is me! what a word is this for the Son of God! Where is that Comforter, which thou promisedst to send to others? where is that thy Father of all mercies, and God of all comfort; in whose presence is the fullness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore? where are those constant and chearful resolutions of a fearless walking through the valley of the shadow of death? Alas! if that face were not hid from thee, whose essence could not be disunited, these pangs could not have been. The sun was withdrawn awhile, that there might be a cool, though not a dark night, as in the world, so in thy breast; withdrawn, in respect of sight, not of being: it was the hardest part of thy sufferings, that thou must be disconsolate.

But, to whom dost thou make this moan, O thou Saviour of men? Hard is that man driven who is forced to complain to his inferiors: had Peter, or James, or John thus bewailed himself to thee, there had been ease to their soul, in venting the sorrow; thou hadst been both apt to pity them, and able to relieve them: but now, in that thou lamentest thy case to them, alas! what issue couldst thou expect? They might be astonished with thy grief, but there is neither power in their hands to free thee from those sorrows, nor power in their compassion to mitigate them: nay, in this condition, what could all the angels of heaven (as of themselves) do to succour thee! What strength could they have but from thee! What creature can help when thou complaineest! It must be only the stronger that can aid the weak.

Old and holy Simeon could foretell to thy blessed mother, that "a sword should pierce through her soul;" but, alas, how many swords at once pierce thine! Every one of these words is both sharp and edged; "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." What human soul is able to conceive the least of those sorrows that oppressed thine! It was not thy body that suffered now; the pain of body is but as the body of pain; the anguish of the soul is as the soul of anguish. That, and in that thou sufferedst; where are they who dare so far disparage thy sorrow, as to say thy soul suffered only in sympathy with the body; not immediately, but by participation; not in itself, but in its partner?

partner? Thou best knewest what thou didst feel, and thou that enduredst thine own pain; canst cry out of thy soul. Neither didst thou say, My soul is troubled; so it often was, even to tears; but "My soul is sorrowful:" as if it had been before assaulted; now possessed with grief. Nor yet this in any tolerable degree of moderation. Changes of passion are incident to every human soul, but what shall we say of "Exceeding sorrowful?" Yet there are degrees in the very extremities of evils; they that are most vehement, may yet be capable of a remedy, at least a relaxation: thine was past these hopes, "Exceeding sorrowful unto death."

What was it, what could it be, O Saviour, that lay thus heavy upon thy divine soul? Was it the fear of death? was it the fore-felt pain, shame, torment of thine ensuing crucifixion? Oh poor and base thoughts of the narrow hearts of cowardly and impotent mortality! How many thousands of thy blessed martyrs have welcomed no less tortures with smiles and gratulations! and have made a sport of exquisite cruelties, which their very tyrants and tormentors thought unsufferable! whence had they this strength but from thee? If their weakness were thus undaunted and prevalent, what was thy power? No, no; it was the sad weight of the sin of mankind; it was the heavy burden of thy Father's wrath for our sin, that thus pressed thy soul, and wrung from thee those bitter expressions. What can it avail thee, O Saviour, to tell thy grief to men? Who can ease thee, but he of whom thou saidst, "My Father is greater than I!" Lo, to him thou turnest; "O Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

Was not this that prayer (O dearest Christ) which, in the days of thy flesh, thou offeredst up with strong crying and tears, to him that was able to save thee from death? Surely, this was it: never was cry so strong; never was God thus solicited. How could heaven choose but shake at such a prayer from the power that made it! How can my heart but tremble to hear this suit from the Captain of our salvation! O thou that saidst, "I and my Father are one," dost thou suffer aught from thy Father but what thou wouldst, what thou determinedst? Was this cup of thine either casual, or forced? Wouldst thou wish for what thou knewest thou wouldst not have possible? Far, far be these mis-conceived thoughts of our ignorance and frailty! Thou camest to suffer, and thou wouldst do what thou camest for; yet, since thou wouldst be a man, thou wouldst take all of man, save sin; it is human (and not sinful) to be loth to suffer what we may avoid; in this will of thine thou wouldst shew what that nature of ours, which thou hadst assumed, could incline to wish; but in thy resolution, thou wouldst shew us what thy victorious thoughts, raised and assisted by thy divine power, had determinately pitched upon; "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." As man, thou hadst a will of thine own; no human soul can be perfect without that main faculty; that will, which naturally could be content to incline towards an exemption from miseries, gladly submits to that divine will whereby thou art designed to the chastisements of our peace: those pains, which in themselves were grievous, thou embracest as decreed; so that thy fear gave place to thy love and obedience. How should we have known these evils so formidable, if thou hadst not, in half a thought, inclined to deprecate them? How could we have avoided so formidable and deadly evils, if thou hadst not willingly undergone them? We acknowledge thine holy fear, we adore thy divine fortitude.

While thy mind was in this fearful agitation, no marvel if thy feet were not fixed; thy place is more changed than thy thoughts; one while thou walkest to thy drowsy attendants, and stirrest up their needful vigilance; then thou returnest to thy passionate devotions; thou fallest again upon thy face; if thy body be humbled down to the earth, thy soul is yet lower; thy prayers are so much the more vehement as thy pangs are; "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." O my Saviour, what an agony am I in while I think of thine! What pain, what fear, what strife, what horror was in thy sacred breast! How didst thou struggle under the weight of our sins, that thou thus sweatest, that thou thus bleedest; all was peace with thee; thou wert one with thy co-eternal and co-essential Father; all the angels worshiped thee; all the powers of heaven and earth awfully acknowledged thine infiniteness. It was our person that scoffed thee in this misery and torment;

ment; in that, thou sustainedst thy Father's wrath, and our curse. If eternal death be insufferable, if every sin deserve eternal death; what, Oh what was it for thy soul, in this short time of thy bitter passion, to answer those millions of eternal deaths which all the sins of all mankind had deserved from the just hand of thy Godhead! I wonder not if thou bleedest a sweat, if thou sweatest blood: if the moisture of that sweat be from the body, the tincture of it from the soul. As there never was such another sweat, so neither can there be ever such a suffering; it is no wonder if the sweat were more than natural, when the suffering was more than human.

O Saviour, so willing was that precious blood of thine to be let forth for us, that it was ready to prevent thy persecutors; and flowed forth in those pores, before thy wounds were opened by thy tormentors. O that my heart could bleed unto thee with true inward compunction for those sins of mine which are guilty of this thine agony; and have drawn blood of thee both in the garden and on the cross! Woe is me, I had been in hell, if thou hadst not been in thine agony; I had scorched, if thou hadst not sweat; Oh let me abhor my own wickedness, and admire and bless thy mercy.

But, O ye blessed spirits, which came to comfort my conflicted Saviour, how did ye look upon this Son of God, when ye saw him labouring for life, under these violent temptations! With what astonishment did ye behold him bleeding whom ye adored! In the wilderness, after his conflict with Satan, ye came, and ministered unto him; and now, in the garden, while he is in an harder combat, ye appear to strengthen him. Oh the wise and marvellous dispensation of the Almighty! whom God will afflict, an angel shall relieve; the Son shall suffer, the servant shall comfort him; the God of angels droops, the angel of God strengthens him.

Blessed Jesu, if, as man, thou wouldst be made a little lower than the angels; how can it disparage thee to be attended, and cheered up by an angel? Thy humiliation would not disdain comfort from meaner hands; how free was it for thy Father, to convey seasonable consolations to thy humbled soul, by whatsoever means! Behold, though thy cup shall not pass, yet it shall be sweetened; what if thou see not for the time thy Father's face, yet thou shalt feel his hand. What could that spirit have done without the God of spirits? O Father of mercies, thou mayest bring thine into agonies, but thou wilt never leave them there. In the midst of the sorrows of my heart, thy comforts shall refresh my soul; whatsoever be the means of my support, I know and adore the author.

While our Lord was yet speaking in the garden, behold Judas (who knew the place, because Jesus often resorted thither with his disciples), being accompanied with some of the chief priests and Pharisees, elders of the people, and captains of the temple, with officers, and part of a band of soldiers commanded by them, cometh thither with lanterns and torches (though it was now full moon, that so they might be sure to find him out, if he should hide himself in any holes or corners), and a great many of them with swords and staves. At their first approach, Judas, according to the sign given them, that they might know Jesus from the rest), steps to him, and saying, Hail, Master, kisseth him. Our Saviour, who knew what would follow, speaks thus to him, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" and, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" Then the company that came to take him, drawing up near to him, Jesus steps forward to meet them, and asks, "Whom seek ye?" They say, "Jesus of Nazareth." He saith, "I am he." At that word they drew back, and "fell to the ground." His confounding them thus with his very breath, and a word of his mouth, shewed his divine power and majesty, and that none could take his life from him, except he were willing to lay it down of himself: but these men, rising up again, were so far from being wrought upon by this miracle and clear evidence of his divine power and Godhead, that they came forward again; and, he propounding his former question to them, "Whom seek ye?" they answer as before, "Jesus of Nazareth." He replies, that if they seek him, he was there ready to yield himself to them, but then they should let his disciples alone; which words of his carried such a commanding power with them, and so wrought upon and overpowered their hearts, that they laid no hands on any of his disciples. And so that was fulfilled, which

he had lately spoken, John xvii. 12. "Of those thou hast given me, I have lost none;" which here he applies to bodily preservation, though in that place it chiefly pointed at the preservation of their souls from sin and evil. Then the rude multitude came and began to lay hands on him. When his disciples saw that, they asked him, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword," and rescue thee, if we can? but before he gave any answer, Peter (that he might shew some of his promised courage) draws his sword, and lays about him, and strikes at the head of Malchus, a servant of the high priest (who it seems was one of the forwardest to lay hold on Jesus), and cuts off his right ear.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS on the Apprehending of CHRIST.

Those disciples that failed of their vigilance, failed not of their courage; they had heard their Master speak of providing swords, and now they thought it was time to use them: "Shall we smite?" They were willing to fight for him, with whom they were not careful to watch: but, of all others, Peter was most forward; instead of opening his lips, he unsheaths his sword: and instead of saying, "Shall I?" smites: he had remarked, that Malchus, a busy servant of the high priest, was too ready to second Judas, and to lay his rude hands upon the Lord of life; against this man his heart rises, and his hand is lifted up: that ear which had too officiously listened to the unjust and cruel charge of his wicked master, is now severed from that worse head which it had basely served.

I love and honour thy zeal, Oh blessed disciple; thou couldst not brook wrong done to thy divine Master: had thy life been dearer to thee than his safety, thou hadst not drawn thy sword upon a whole troop: it was in earnest that thou saidst, "Though all men, yet not I;" and, "Though I should die with thee, yet I will not deny thee;" Lo, thou art ready to die upon him that should touch that sacred person; and what would thy life now have been, in comparison of renouncing him? Since thou wert so fervent, why didst thou not rather fall upon that traitor who betrayed him, than that officer who arrested him? Surely, the sin was so much greater, as the plot of mischief is more than the execution; as a domestic is nearer than a stranger, and as the treason of a friend is worse than the forced enmity of an hireling. Was it that the guilty wretch, upon the fact done, withdrew himself, and shrouded his false head under the wings of darkness? Was it that thou couldst not so suddenly apprehend the odious depth of that villainy, and instantly hate him that had been thy old companion? Was it that thy amazedness as yet conceived not the purpose of this seizure, and astonishedly waited for the success? Was it, that though Judas were more faulty, yet Malchus was more imperiously cruel? However this be, thy courage was awakened with thyself; and thy heart was no less sincere than thine hand was rash: "Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Good intentions are no proper warrant for our actions: O Saviour thou canst at once accept of our meanings, and censure our deeds; could there be an affection more worth encouragement, than the love to such a Master? could there be a more just cause wherein to draw his sword, than in thy quarrel? Yet this love, this quarrel, cannot shield Peter from thy check; thy meek tongue smites him gently, who had furiously smote thine enemy; "Put up thy sword."

It was Peter's sword; but to put up, not to use. There is a sword which Peter may use, but it is of another metal; our weapons are, as our warfare, spiritual; if he smite not with this, he incurs no less blame than for smiting with the other; with respect to his material sword, what should he do with it who is not allowed to strike? When the Prince of peace bade his followers sell their coat, and buy a sword, he meant to insinuate the need of these arms, not their actual exercise; and to teach them the danger of the time, not the manner of the repulse of danger: when they therefore said, "Behold, here are two swords," he answered, "It is enough;" he said not, Go, buy more. More had not been enough, if a bodily defence had been intended; David's tower had been too strait to yield sufficient furniture of this kind; when it comes to use, Peter's one sword is too much; "Put up thy sword." Indeed, there is a temporal sword; and that sword must be

be drawn; else, for what purpose is it? but it must be drawn by him that bears it; and he bears it that is ordained to be an avenger, to execute wrath upon him that doth evil; for "he bears not the sword in vain:" if another man draw it, it cuts his fingers; and draws so much blood of him that unwarrantably wields it, as that "he who takes the sword, shall perish with the sword." Can I choose but wonder how Peter could thus strike, unwounded! how he, whose first blow made the fray, could escape being hewed in pieces by that band of ruffians! This could not have been, if thy power, O Saviour, had not restrained their rage; if thy seasonable and sharp reproof had not prevented their revenge.

Jesus, being thus apprehended, expostulates with that rude company about the manner of their coming to take him, being armed with swords and slaves, as if they came to apprehend a thief, or some notorious malefactor. He tells them, they had opportunity enough before this to have apprehended him, when he was daily teaching in the temple; but the scriptures must be fulfilled, that foretold he should suffer death for the sins of men, and, in order thereto, should be apprehended as a malefactor. While these things were doing, a certain young man (who probably dwelt thereabouts, near unto the garden of Gethsemane, and was a well-willer to our Saviour, having been raised from his bed by the noise, and taking only his inner garment, and that, through haste, not put on, but loosely cast about him), being laid hold on by them, as a follower of Jesus, left his linen garment in their hands, and got away.

Having thus apprehended Jesus, they bound him, and brought him first to Annas, father-in-law to Caiaphas the high-priest (without whose advice possibly he did no matter of moment, he having been high-priest a little before), and his house being in the way, they, it seems, brought Jesus before him first, either out of respect to him, or to take his advice, what further to do with him. Whilst he was here, some ran before to Caiaphas, to certify him of the taking of Jesus.

After this, he is led to Caiaphas, in whose house the chief priests, scribes, and elders of the people were met, expecting, it seems, to have Jesus, on his apprehension, brought before them. Peter follows thither (though at some distance), and by another disciple, who was accustomed to be there, he is helped into the hall, and sits with the servants by the fire.

Caiaphas examines Christ concerning his doctrine, and concerning his disciples; pretending him to be guilty of heresy in doctrine, and sedition in gathering disciples. Our Saviour answers concerning his doctrine (waving the matter of his disciples, which depended thereon); for if his doctrine were true, and the doctrine of the Messiah, there could be no sedition or schism, though all Israel should embrace it. Therefore he says, "I spake openly * to the world in the synagogue and temple, whither the Jews use to resort; ask them that heard me, why askest thou me," who am the person accused, and therefore not so like to be believed in my own cause? One of the officers, that stood by, hearing him thus speak, struck him with the palm of his hand, as supposing him to have spoken irreverently to the high priest. To whom Jesus replies, "If I have spoken well, why smitest thou me? If ill, bear witness of it †." Then they sought false witnesses against him; but the first they procured agreed not in their testimony, and were not able to convict him of any such crimes as they desired to charge him with. At last there came two false witnesses, one whereof avouched, that he said, as Mark xiv. 58. "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days will build another that is made without hands." The other, that he said, as in Matt. xxvi. 61. "I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days." As these witnesses did not agree in their

* This profession of Christ doth in no respect contradict his practice elsewhere in teaching his disciples secretly, Mark iv. 10, 11. for he taught them no other things for kind of doctrine, but what he taught publicly, only he expounded it to them. And withal he did so, not that it might be concealed, but that they might proclaim it, and make it known afterwards.

† He defends himself with reason, not turning the other cheek, shewing that that precept in Matt. v. 19. commands only this, that rather than take revenge, we should turn the other cheek, that is, suffer a second injury.

testimony,

testimony, so they manifestly perverted his words, which were these, as they are recorded, John ii. 19, 21. "Destroy this temple (therein foretelling prophetically what they would do afterwards), "and in three days I will raise it up again." He spake of the temple of his body, and not the temple at Jerusalem: so that they both mis-reported his words, and perverted the true sense and meaning of them. Our Saviour made no reply to those men's testimonies, because they being manifestly false and contradicting each other, they did fall to the ground of themselves. Then the high priest stands up, and adjures him by the Living God, and by the reverence he bare to that dreadful name, that he would declare, whether he were the Christ, the Son of the Blessed *. To this our Saviour answers directly and expressly, "I am," Mark xiv. 62. Or, "Thou sayest it," that is, thou sayest the very truth; so that he plainly avouches that he was, indeed, the Christ, and the Son of God, the true Messiah, promised and foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament. And, though he now stood in a mean condition before their tribunal, yet they should see him "sit at the right hand of God," according to the prophecy that went before him, Ps. cx. 1. that is, should see him advanced to the next place to God, both in dignity and glory, as also in authority, rule, and government, especially, over his church. Not that they could or should with bodily eyes see him thus glorified in heaven; but they should come to know, and take notice (whether they would or no), that he was thus advanced, viz. by the signs and tokens of his glorification. 1. Those that went before it, as his resurrection and ascension: 2. By those that followed it; as 1. By his powerful and miraculous sending down the Holy Ghost upon his apostles soon after his ascension, Acts ii. 33. 2. By his powerful calling and gathering a church to himself immediately after, by the ministry of his apostles. 3. By his powerful protection of his church against all the enemies thereof. 4. By his executing vengeance on the obdurate Jews in the destruction of their city and temple. 5. By his glorious coming to judgment †, attended with his holy angels, which they should see hereafter: "Ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Caiaphas hearing this, in great indignation rent his cloaths, and cried out, Behold, "He hath spoken blasphemy; what think ye?" They said, "He hath blasphemed; what need have we of further witnesses? He is worthy to die ‡," according to the law, Lev. xxiv. 16. This was his first condemnation by the Sanhedrin (or council of the Jews); and that upon a religious account, because he said, "He was the Son of God."

Then there were most vile abuses and indignities put upon him in the high priest's palace by the servants and others. 1. They spit in his face. 2. They blindfolded him. 3. They smote him with their fists, and the palms of their hands. 4. They mocked him, and bade him divine or prophesy who it was that smote him. "And many other things blasphemously spake they against him."

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS on CHRIST when before CAIAPHAS.

What eyes can but run over to see those hands, which made heaven and earth, wrung together, and bruised with those merciless cords! see him bound who came to restore us to the liberty of the sons of God; to see the Lord of life contemptuously dragged through the streets, first to the house of Annas; then from thence to the house of Caiaphas; from him to Pilate; from Pilate to Herod; from Herod back again to Pilate; from Pilate to Calvary: while in the mean time the base rabble, and scum of the incensed multitude, runs after him with shouts and scorns! The act of death hath not in it so much misery and horror as this pomp of death.

* The Jews, when they make mention of God, use to call him Baruc Hu, that is, the Blessed one: which title they used instead of God, out of a fear lest they should use the proper name of himself too commonly.

† Our Saviour used to refer the unbelieving Jews, partly to the resurrection (as when he says, "They shall have no other sign, than that of the prophet Jonas"), and partly to the day of judgment, as here.

‡ Upon this account they would have stoned him once before, apprehending that he blasphemed, because he professed himself to be the Son of God.

What need was there for all this pageant of cruelty? wherefore was this state and lingering of an unjust execution? was it because their malice held a quick dispatch too much mercy? was it because, while they meant to be bloody, they would fain see nought just? A sudden violence had been palpably murderous; now the colour of a legal process gilds over all their deadly spite; and would seem to render them honest, and the accused guilty.

This arresting and arraignment of the innocent was a true night-work; a deed of so much darkness was not for the light. Old Annas, and that wicked bench of grey-headed scribes and elders, can be content to break their sleep to do mischief. Envy and malice can make noon of midnight: it is resolved he shall die; and now pretences must be sought that he may be decently murdered. All evil begins at the sanctuary; the priests, scribes, and elders, are the first in this bloody scene; they have paid for this head, and now long to see what they shall have for their thirty silverlings. The bench is set in the hall of Caiaphas: false witnesses are sought for, and hired; they agree not, but shame their suborners; alas, alas! what safety can there be for innocence, when the evidence is wilfully corrupted! what state was ever so pure, as not to yield some miscreants, that will either sell or lend an oath! what a brand hath the wisdom of God set upon falsehood, even disagreement and distraction! whereas truth ever holds together, and jars not while it is itself. O Saviour, what a perfect innocence was in thy life, what an exact purity in thy doctrine, that malice itself cannot so much as devise what to slander! It was hard if hell should not find some factors upon earth: at last, two witnesses are brought in, that have learned to agree with themselves, while they differed from truth; they say the same, though false; "This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and build it again in three days." Perjured wretches! Were these the expressions which you heard from that sacred mouth? Said he formally thus as ye have deposed? It is true, he spake of a temple, of destroying, of building, of three days; but did he speak of that temple, of his own destroying, of a material building in that space? He said, "Destroy ye;" ye say, "I am able to destroy." He said, "this temple of his body;" ye say, "The temple of God." He said, I will raise up this temple of my body in three days; ye say, I am able in three days to build this material temple of God. The words were his, the sense is yours: the words were true, the evidence false: so, while you report the words, and mis-report the sense, ye swear a true falsehood, and are truly forsworn. Where the resolutions are fixed, any colour will serve. Had those words been spoken, they contained no crime; had he been such as they supposed him, a mere man, the speech had carried an appearance of ostentation, none of blasphemy; yet, how vehement is Caiaphas for an answer! as if those words had already battered that sacred pile; or, the protestation of his ability had been the highest treason against the God of the temple. That infinite wisdom knew well how little satisfaction there could be in answers, where the sentence was determined; "Jesus held his peace." Where the asker is unworthy, the question captious, and words of no consequence, the best answer is silence.

Ere while Christ's just and moderate speech to Annas was returned with a smite on the cheek, now his silence is no less displeasing. Caiaphas was not more malicious than crafty; what was in vain attempted by witnesses, shall be drawn out of Christ's own mouth; what an accusation could not effect, an adjuration shall; "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." This was indeed the way to screw out a killing answer. Caiaphas, thy mouth was impure, but thy charge is dreadful; now if Jesus hold his peace, he is cried down for a profane disregarder of that awful name; if he answer, he is ensnared: an affirmation is death; a denial worse than death. No, Caiaphas, thou shalt well know, it was not fear that all this while stopped that gracious mouth; thou speakest to him that cannot fear those faces he hath made: he that hath charged us to confess him, cannot but confess himself; "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said." There is a time to speak, and a time to keep silence; he that is the wisdom of his Father, hath here given us a pattern of both: we may not so speak as to give advantage to cavils; we may not be so silent, as to betray the truth. Thou shalt have no more cause, proud and insulting Caiaphas, to complain of a speechless prisoner; now thou shalt hear

more than thou demandedst; "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." There spake my Saviour; the voice of God, and not of man. Hear now, insolent high-priest, and be confounded; that Son of man, whom thou seest, is the Son of God whom thou canst not see; that Son of man, that Son of God, that God and man, whom thou now seest standing despicably before thy consistorial seat, in a base dejectedness, him shalt thou once, with horror and trembling, see majestically sitting on the throne of heaven, attended with thousand thousands of angels, and coming in the clouds to that dreadful judgment, wherein thyself, amongst other damned malefactors, shalt be presented before that glorious tribunal of his, and adjudged to thy just and deserved torments!

Go now, wretched hypocrite, and rend thy garments; while in the mean time thou art worthy to have thy soul rent from thy body, for thy spiteful blasphemy against the Son of God. Respecting what follows, thy pretence is fair, and such as cannot but receive applause from thy compacted crew; "What need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. What think ye? And they answered and said, He is guilty of death."

What heed is to be taken of men's judgment! So light are they upon the balance, that one dram of prejudice or injustice turns the scale! Who were these but the grave benchers of Jerufalem; the synod of the choice Rabbies of Israel! yet these pass sentence against the Lord of life; sentence of that death of his, whereby (if ever) they shall be redeemed from the murder of their sentence.

O Saviour, this is not the last time, wherein thou hast received cruel dooms from them that profess learning and holiness; what wonder is it if thy weak members suffer that which was endured by so perfect an head! what care we to be judged by man's sentence, when thou, who art the righteous Judge of the world, wert thus mis-judged by men? Now is the fury of thy malignant enemies let loose upon thee; what measure can be too hard for him who is denounced worthy of death! How those foul mouths defile thy blessed face with their impure spittle, by the venomous froth of their malice! now those cruel hands are lifted up to buffet thy sacred cheeks: now scorn and insult triumph over thine humble patience, "Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who it is that smote thee." Oh dear Jesus, what a beginning is here of a passion! There thou standest, bound, condemned, spit upon, buffeted, derided by malicious sinners! Thou art bound, who camest to loose the bands of death; thou art condemned, whose sentence must acquit or condemn mankind; thou art spit upon, who art fairer than the sons of men; thou art buffeted, in whose mouth was no guile; thou art derided, who art clothed with glory and majesty!

While these things were doing, Peter, as was said before, having got into the high priest's hall, that he might see the end, and what this matter would come to, was warming himself by the fire, sometimes standing, sometimes sitting. The maid that kept the door comes to him, and challenges him for one of Christ's disciples, and tells him, he was with Jesus of Galilee. He denies it before them all: yea, that he so much as knew him, and shrinks away in the porch, and then the first cock crew, which was about midnight.

Some time after, as Peter was going out, another maid sees him, and says to them that were there present, "This man was also with Jesus of Nazareth." Upon this he returns back again to the fire, possibly to avoid further suspicion of himself: then others that stood by questioned him, and one among them directly charged him to be one of them; he again denies it, and that with an oath, Matt. xxvi. 72. About an hour after (which space of time Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin took up in examining our Saviour), one of those there present said to the company, "Surely this man is of Jesus' disciples, for he is a Galilean, and his speech bewrayeth him," Luke xxii. 59. Hereupon others that stood by charged him directly therewith, Matt. xxvi. 73. Mark xiv. 70. At last a kinsman of Malchus (whose ear Peter had but a little before cut off) challenges him, and particularly asks him, "Whether he did not see him in the garden with Jesus?" John xviii. 26. Peter being so hotly charged, and apprehending himself to be in great danger if he did not clear himself; he not only denies it, and that with an oath, but began to curse and execrate himself

himself if it were so. Whilst he spake, the cock crew a second time, about the morning watch. The council now rising, and they bringing Jesus through the place where Peter was, he turned about, and looked on him in such a manner, and withal touched his heart with such a sense of his sin, that he, remembering what had been said unto him, "went out, and wept bitterly."

We have seen the result of the night-council. Now follows the council held in the morning. As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, and chief priests and scribes, had Jesus a second time brought into the council, and there question him anew, "Whether he were the Messiah or not." It seems they intended to try whether he would stand to what he had before said. He answers, that "if he should tell them, they would not believe him;" and if he should demonstrate to them by never so convincing arguments, that he was the Messiah, they would neither be convinced thereby, nor release him. However, the time was coming, when they should find it true to their cost; for within a while he should be "exalted to the right hand of his Father," and then he should execute judgment and vengeance upon them. Upon this they ask him, "Art thou the Son of God?" He answered, that he was. They hereupon judge him a blasphemer again out of his own mouth, and deserving to die: and so they resolve to deliver him up to the Roman power, and accordingly lead him away bound to Pilate, the present governor and procurator of Judæa, under Tiberius the Roman emperor.

The chief priests and elders now bring Jesus early in the morning bound to Pontius Pilate the governor, but would not go into his house themselves (being the house of a Gentile), but stayed without, lest they should be defiled, and so rendered unfit to eat the passover that night, John xviii. 28. Pilate therefore coming forth unto them, to the gate of his palace, and Jesus being presented before him, he asks the Jews, what accusation they had brought against him. They replied, that if he had not been a malefactor, they would not have brought him before him, John xviii. 29, 30. Then they accused him of three things: 1. That "he perverted the nation." 2. That "he forbade to pay tribute to Cæsar." 3. That "he said, that he himself is Christ a King," Luke xxiii. 1, 2. For the first, how far was Christ from perverting the nation, or seducing them by any false doctrine, who strove to bring them to repentance, and to believe in himself the true Messiah, that they might be saved! For the second; he bade them "render to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's," Mark vii. 17. For the third; he was so far from affecting a temporal kingdom (though they themselves expected a Messiah that should be a temporal king), that when the people would have made him king, he utterly refused it, John vi. 15. So that their accusations, being apparently false, deserved no answer, and accordingly our Saviour makes none to their charge. Hereupon Pilate said to him, "Hearest thou not how many things they object against thee?" But still he was silent. Pilate wonders at his strange meekness and patience, that being accused of such matters as touched his life, yet he was so far from fearing death, that he was silent, and said not a word to clear his own character.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS on CHRIST'S Examination before PILATE.

These great masters of Israel flock from their own consistory to Pilate's judgment hall. The sentence had been theirs, the execution must be his; and now they hope to bear down Jesus with the stream of that full assembly.

But, what ails you, O ye rulers of Israel, that ye stand thus thronging at the door? Why do ye not go in to that public room of judicature, to call for that justice ye came for? Was it because ye would not defile yourselves with the contagion of an heathen roof? Holy men! your consciences would not suffer you to yield to so impure an act; your passover must be kept, your persons must be clean; while ye expect justice from the man, ye abhor the pollution

pollution of the place. Woe to you priests, scribes, elders, hypocrites; can there be any roof so unclean as that of your own breasts? Not Pilate's walls, but your hearts are impure. Is murder your errand, and do you stick at a local infection? God shall smite you, ye whited walls! Do ye long to be stained with blood, with the blood of God, and do ye fear to be defiled with the touch of Pilate's pavement? Doth so small a gnat stick in your throats, while ye swallow such a camel of flagitious wickedness? Go out of yourselves, ye false dissemblers, if ye would not be unclean. Pilate, by the sequel, had more cause to fear lest his walls should be defiled with the presence of such prodigious monsters of impiety.

That plausible governor condescends to humour their superstition; they dare not come in to him; he condescends to go forth to them. Even Pilate begins justly, "What accusation bring you against this man?" It is not fit to judge of religion by the outward demeanor of men. There is more justice among the Romans than amongst Jews. These malicious Rabbies thought it enough that they had sentenced Jesus; no more was now expected but a speedy execution; "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee." Civil justice must be their hangman; it is conviction enough that he is delivered up to the secular powers. Themselves have judged, these other must kill. Pilate and Caiaphas have changed places; this Pagan speaks that law and justice which that high-priest should have done; and that high-priest speaks those murdering incongruities which would better have become the mouth of a Pagan. What needs any new trial? Dost thou know, Pilate, who we are? Is this the honour that thou givest to our sacred priesthood? Is this thy valuation of our sanctity? Had the basest of the vulgar complained to thee, thou couldst but have put them to a review; our place and holiness expected not to be distrusted; if our scrupulous consciences suspect thy very walls, thou mayest well think there is small reason to suspect our consciences. Upon a full hearing, ripe deliberation, and exquisitely-judicial proceeding, we have sentenced this malefactor to death; there needs no more from thee but thy command of execution. Oh monster both of malice and injustice! Must he then be a malefactor whom ye will condemn? Is your bare word ground enough to shed blood? Whom did ye ever kill but the righteous? By whose hands perished the prophets? The word was mistaken; ye should have said, 'If we had not been malefactors, we had never delivered up this innocent man unto thee.'

That must needs be notoriously unjust, which even nature hath taught Pagans to abhor. Pilate sees and hates this bloody suggestion and practice. Do ye pretend holiness, and urge so injurious a violence? If he be such as ye accuse him, where is his conviction? If he cannot be legally convicted, why should he die? Do you think I may take your accusation for a crime? If I must judge for you, why have you judged for yourselves? Could ye suppose that I would condemn any man unheard? If your Jewish laws yield you this liberty, the Roman laws yield it not to me. It is not for me to judge after your laws, but after our own. Your prejudgment may not sway me; and since ye have gone so far, be ye your own carvers of justice; take ye him, and judge him according to your law.

Oh Pilate, how happy had it been for thee, if thou hadst persisted in this! thus thou hadst washed thy hands more clean than in all thy basins. Might law have been the rule of this judgment, and not malice, this blood had not been shed. How palpably doth their tongue bewray their heart! "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." Pilate talks of judgment, they talk of death: this was their only aim: law was but a colour, judgment was but a ceremony; death was their drift; and, without this, nothing. Blood-thirsty priests and elders! it is well that this power of yours is restrained; no innocence could have been safe, if your lawless will had had no limits. It were pity this sword should be in any but just and sober hands: your fury did not always consult with law. What law allowed your violence to Stephen, to Paul, and Barnabas? and your deadly attempts against this blessed Jesus, whom ye now persecute? How lawful was it for you to procure that death, which ye could not inflict? It is all the care of hypocrites to seek umbrages

umbrages and pretences for their hateful purposes; and to make no other use of laws (whether divine or human) but to serve turns.

Where death is before resolved on, there cannot want accusations; malice is not so barren as not to suggest crimes sufficient; "And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation; and forbidding to give tribute unto Cæsar, saying, that he himself is Christ and King."

What accusations, saidst thou, O Pilate? Heinous and capital: thou mightest have believed our confident intimation; but since thou wilt needs urge us to particulars, know that we come furnished with such an indictment as shall make thine ears glow to hear it. Besides that blasphemy whereof he hath been condemned by us, this man is a seducer of the people, a raiser of sedition, an usurper of sovereignty. O impudent suggestion! What marvel is it, O Saviour, if thine honest servants be loaded with slanders, when thy most innocent person escaped not so shameful criminations? Thou a perverter of the nation, who taughtest the way of God truly! Thou a forbiddener of tribute, who payedst it, who prescribedst it, who provedst it to be Cæsar's due! Thou a challenger of temporal sovereignty, who avoidedst it, renouncedst it, professedst thyself come to serve? Oh the forehead of malice! Go, ye shameless traducers, and swear that truth is guilty of all falsehood, justice of all wrong; and that the sun is the only cause of darkness; fire, of cold!

Now Pilate startles at the charge. The name of tribute, the name of Cæsar are mentioned; these potent spells can fetch him back to the common hall, and call Jesus to the bar: there, O Saviour, standest thou meekly to be judged, who shalt once come to judge the quick and the dead; then shall he, before whom thou stoodest guiltless and dejected, stand before thy dreadful Majesty, guilty and trembling.

The name of a king, of Cæsar, is justly tender and awful; the least whisper of an usurpation or disturbance is entertained with a jealous care. Pilate takes this intimation at the first hint; "Art thou then the King of the Jews?" He felt his own freehold now touched, it was time for him to stir: Daniel's weeks were now generally known to be near expiring: many arrogant and busy spirits, as Judas of Galilee, Theudas, and that Egyptian Seducer, taking that advantage, had raised several conspiracies, set up new titles to the crown, gathered forces to maintain their false claims; perhaps Pilate supposed some such business now on foot, and therefore asks so curiously, "Art thou the King of the Jews?"

He that was no less wisdom than truth, thought it not best either to affirm or deny at once. Sometimes it may be extremely prejudicial to speak all truths. To disclaim that title suddenly, which had been of old given him by the prophets, at his birth, by the Eastern sages, and now lately at his procession by the acclaming multitude, had been injurious to himself; to profess and challenge it absolutely, had been unsafe, and needlessly provoking; by wise and just degrees, therefore, doth he so affirm this truth, that he both satisfies the inquirer, and takes off all peril and prejudice from his assertion; Pilate shall know him to be a King, but such a King as no king needs to fear, as all kings ought to acknowledge and adore: "My kingdom is not of this world:" It is your misapprehension, O ye earthly potentates, that causes your fears: Herod hears of a King born, and is troubled; Pilate hears of a King of the Jews, and is incensed: were ye not ignorant, ye could not be jealous; had ye learned to distinguish of kingdoms, those suspicions would vanish.

There are secular kingdoms, and there are spiritual; neither of these trenches upon the other: your kingdom is secular, Christ's is spiritual; both may, both must stand together. His laws are divine, yours civil. His reign is eternal, yours temporal: the glory of his rule is inward, and stands in the graces of sanctification, love, peace, righteousness, joy in the Holy Ghost; yours in outward pomp, riches, magnificence. His enemies are the devil, the world, the flesh; yours are bodily usurpers, and external peace-breakers. His sword is the power of the word and Spirit, yours material. His rule is over the conscience, yours over bodies and lives. He punishes with hell, ye with temporal death or torture. Yea, so far is he from opposing your government, that by him ye kings reign; your

sceptres are his; but to maintain, not to wield, not to resist. O the unjust fears of vain men! he takes not away your earthly kingdoms, who gives you heavenly; he uncrowns not the body, who crowns the soul; his intention is not to make you less great, but more happy.

The charge is so fully answered, that Pilate acquits the prisoner. The Jewish masters stand still without; their very malice dares not venture to incur pollution, in going in to prosecute their accusation. Pilate hath examined him within; and now comes forth to these eager complainants, with a cold answer to their overhot expectation; "I find in him no fault at all." O noble testimony of Christ's innocence, from that mouth which afterwards doomed him to death! What a difference there is betwixt a man as himself, and as he is the servant of others' wills! It is Pilate's tongue that says, "I find in him no fault at all." It is the Jews' tongue in Pilate's mouth that says, "Let him be crucified." That cruel sentence cannot blot him whom this attestation cleareth. Neither doth he say, "I find him not guilty in that whereof he is accused; but gives an universal acquittance of the whole carriage of Christ, "I find in him no fault at all." In spite of malice, innocence shall find abettors; rather than Christ shall want witnesses, the mouth of Pilate shall be opened to his justification. How did these Jewish blood-suckers stand thunderstruck with so unexpected a word? His absolution was their death; his acquittal their conviction. "No fault, when we have found crimes! no fault at all, when we have condemned him for capital offences! How palpably doth Pilate give us the lye! How shamefully doth he affront our authority, and disparage our justice!" So ingenuous a testimony doubtless exasperated the fury of the Jews; the fire of their indignation was sevenfold more augmented with the sense of their repulse.

I tremble to think how just Pilate as yet was, and how soon after depraved; yea, how merciful, together with that justice. How fain would he have freed Jesus, whom he found faultless! Corrupt custom, in memory of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, allowed the Jews to gratify themselves with the free delivery of some one prisoner. Tradition would be incroaching; the paschal lamb was monument enough of that happy rescue; but men affect to have something of their own; and Pilate was willing to take this advantage for dismissing Jesus. That he might be the more likely to prevail in his intention, he proposes him together with the choice and nomination of such a notorious malefactor as he might justly think incapable of all mercy; Barabbas, a thief, a murderer, a seditious person: infamous for all, odious to all. Had he propounded some innocent prisoner, he might have feared the election would be doubtful; but he cannot mistrust the competition of so notorious a malefactor: "Then they all cried again, Not him, but Barabbas."

O malice, beyond all example shameless and bloody: who can but blush to think that an Heathen should see Jews so impetuously unjust, so savagely cruel! He knew there was no fault to be found in Jesus: he knew there was no crime that was not to be found in Barabbas; yet he hears (and blushes to hear) them say, "Not him, but Barabbas." Was not this, as we may reasonably think, out of similitude of condition? Every thing affects the like to itself; every thing affects the preservation of that it liketh. What wonder, then, if ye Jews, who profess yourselves the murderers of that Just One, favour a Barabbas? O Saviour, what a killing indignity was this for thee to hear from thine own nation! Hast thou refused all glory, to put on shame and misery for their sakes? hast thou disregarded thy blessed self to save them; and do they refuse thee, and prefer Barabbas? Hast thou said, Not heaven, but earth; not sovereignty, but service; not the Gentile, but the Jew; and do they say, Not him, but Barabbas? Do ye thus requite the Lord, O ye foolish people and unjust? Thus were thine ears and thine eyes first crucified; and through them was thy soul wounded, even to death, before thy death: while thou sawest their rage, and heardest their noise of "Crucify, crucify."

Pilate would have chastised thee. Even that had been a cruel mercy from him; for what evil hadst thou done? But that cruelty had been true mercy to this of the Jews, whom no blood would satisfy but that of thy heart. He calls for thy fault, they call for punishment;

punishment: as if proclaiming thy crucifixion were not intended to satisfy justice, but malice, "they cried the more, Crucify him, crucify him!"

As their clamour grew, so the president's justice declined; those graces which lie loose and ungrounded, are easily washed away with the first tide of popularity. Thrice had that man proclaimed the innocence of him whom he now inclines to condemn; "willing to content the people." O the foolish aims of ambition! Not God, not his conscience, come into any regard; but the people. What a base idol doth the proud man adore! even the vulgar, which a base man despiseth. What is their applause, but an idle wind? what is their anger, but a painted fire? O Pilate, where now are thyself and thy people? whereas a good conscience would have stuck by thee for ever, and have given thee boldness before the face of that God which thou and thy people shall never have the happiness to behold.

The Jews have performed the first part; the Gentiles must now act theirs. Cruel Pilate, who knew Jesus was delivered for envy, accused falsely, and maliciously pursued, hath turned his proffered chastisement into scourging; "Then Pilate took Jesus, and scourged him." Woe is me, dear Saviour, I feel thy lashes; I shrink under thy painful whippings: thy nakedness covers me with shame and confusion: that tender and precious body of thine is galled and torn with cords; thou that didst of late water the garden of Gethsemane with the drops of thy bloody sweat, dost now bedew the pavement of Pilate's hall with the showers of thy blood: how fully hast thou made good thy word, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting." How can I be enough sensible of my own stripes! These blows are mine; my sins have given them, and they give remedies to my sins; "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes are we healed." O blessed Jesu, why should I think strange to be scourged with tongue or hand, when I see thee bleeding! what lashes can I fear either from heaven or earth, since thy scourges have been borne for me, and have sanctified them to me! Now, dear Jesus, what a world of insolent reproaches, indignities, tortures, art thou entering into! To an ingenuous and tender disposition, scorns are torment enough; but here, pain helps to perfect thy misery and their despite.

Who should be actors in this whole bloody execution, but grim and barbarous soldiers, men enured to cruelty; in whose faces were written the characters of murder: whose very trade was killing; and whose looks were enough to prevent their hands. These, for the greater terror of their concourse, are called together: and whether by the connivance, or the command of their wicked governor, or by the instigation of the malicious Jews, conspire to anticipate that his death with scorns, which they will afterwards inflict with violence.

O my blessed Saviour, was it not enough that thy sacred body was stripped of thy garments, and wealed with bloody stripes; but that thy person must be made the mocking-stock of thine insulting enemies! thy back disguised with purple robes, thy temples wounded with a thorny crown; thy face spit on; thy cheeks buffeted; thy head smitten; thy hand sceptred with a reed; thyself derided with wry mouths, bended knees, scoffing acclamations! Insolent soldiers! whence is all this jeering and sport, but to flout Majesty? All these are the ornaments and ceremonies of a royal inauguration, which now in scorn ye cast upon my despised Saviour. Go on, make yourselves merry with this execrable pastime: alas, long ago have ye felt him whom ye now scorned. Is he a king, think you, whom ye thus sported with? Look upon him with gnashing and horror, whom ye looked at with mocking and insult; was not that head fit for your thorns, which you now see crowned with glory and majesty? Was not that hand fit for a reed, whose iron sceptre crushes you to death? Was not that face fit to be spit upon, from the dreadful aspect whereof ye are ready to desire the mountains to cover you?

In the mean time, whither, O whither dost thou stoop, O thou co-eternal Son of thine eternal Father; how low dost thou abase thyself for me! I have sinned, and thou art punished; I have exalted myself, and thou art humbled; I have clad myself with shame, and thou art stripped; I have made myself naked, and thou art clothed with robes of dishonour;

dishonour; my head hath devised evil, and thine is pierced with thorns; I have smitten thee, and thou art smitten for me; I have dishonoured thee, and thou for my sake art scorned; thou art made the sport of men, for me who have deserved to be insulted on by devils.

Thus disguised, thus bleeding, thus mangled, thus deformed art thou brought forth, whether for compassion, or for a more universal derision, to the furious multitude, with an *Ecce homo*, "Behold the man!" Look upon him, O ye merciless Jews; see him in his shame, in his wounds and blood, and now see whether ye think him miserable enough: ye see his face black and blue with buffeting, his eyes swollen, his cheeks smeared with spittle, his skin torn with scourges, his whole body bathed with blood; and would ye yet have more? "Behold the man!" the man whom ye envied for his greatness, whom ye feared for his usurpation: doth he not look like a King; is he not royally dressed? See whether his magnificence do not command reverence from you; would ye wish a finer King? Are ye not afraid he will wrest the sceptre out of Cæsar's hand? "Behold the man!"

Yea, and behold him well, O thou proud Pilate, O ye cruel soldiers, O ye insatiable Jews; ye see him base, whom ye shall see glorious. The time shall surely come, wherein ye shall see him in another dress; he shall shine, whom ye now see to bleed; his crown cannot be so ignominious and painful as it shall one day be majestic and precious; ye who bend your knees to him in scorn, shall see all knees both in heaven and in earth, and under the earth, to bow before him in an awful adoration; ye that now see him with contempt, shall behold him with horror.

What an inward war do I yet find in the breast of Pilate! His conscience bids him spare, his popularity bids him kill. His wife, warned by a dream, warns him to have no hand in the blood of that just man; the importunate multitude presses him for a sentence of death: all shifts have been tried to free the man whom he hath pronounced innocent; all violent motives are urged to condemn that man, whom malice falsely affirms to be guilty.

In the height of this strife, when conscience and moral justice were ready to sway Pilate's distracted heart to a just dismissal, I hear the Jews cry out, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." There is the word that strikes it dead; it is now not a time to demur any more. In vain shall we hope that a carnal heart can prefer the care of his soul to the care of his safety and honour: God to Cæsar: now Jesus must die; Pilate hastens into the judgment hall; the sentence sticks no longer in his teeth, "Let him be crucified."

Let us here a little recapitulate and enlarge upon some particulars of this awful scene: Pilate said, "Take him, and judge him according to your own law." They reply, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death," John xviii. 31, 32. for now was "the sceptre departed from Judah," according to that prophecy, Gen. xlix. 10. and the Jews had no power absolutely to condemn any man, and put him to death, though for capital crimes; but this power was reserved by the Roman emperor to his own deputy or president: and their wanting this power contributed to the fulfilling of what Christ prophesied before of his own death, Matt. xx. 19. John xii. 32. namely, that "he should be delivered to the Gentiles, and should be crucified," which was not a Jewish, but a Roman punishment.

Upon this, Pilate resolved to examine the matter himself; and apprehending, it seems, the first of their accusations to be a business concerning their law, he would not meddle with it. The second he either believed not, or accounted it comprehended in the third. Therefore entering into the judgment hall, he takes Jesus, and examines him, whether he were the king of the Jews, or no? Our Saviour desires (before he answers) to know whether he asked that question for his own satisfaction, or as a crime laid to his charge by the Jews? Pilate answers, that he was no Jew, nor acquainted with what they (out of their books and prophecies) expected and promised to themselves; but his own nation, and their church-rulers had accused him before him; and therefore he demands
what

what he had done, that might so incense them against him. Upon this our Saviour tells Pilate of what nature and quality his kingdom was, namely, not of this world; for then he should engage his servants and followers to fight in his cause and quarrel, and in a military manner to assist him as their king, and to defend him from being delivered into the power of the Jews his adversaries: but he pretended not to any such earthly kingdom. Pilate then asks him directly, "Whether he were a King?" Our Saviour answers, "Thou sayest that I am a King, and it is so indeed as thou sayest." I am a King, and the King of the Jews, but not a temporal king to rule over them after the manner of earthly kings, with temporal power, and worldly pomp and splendor: but I am the true Messiah, and consequently a spiritual King, to rule and govern not only the Jews, but my whole church (collected both of Jews and Gentiles), after a spiritual manner. And "to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth;" and to this truth, among others, that I am a King, over my church, to order the affairs thereof, and so to publish that decree of my Father, recorded in Ps. ii. 6, 7, 8. "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Sion," &c. [See Zech. ix. 9. Isa. ix. 6. Luke i. 31, 32.] And all who are of the truth, or born of God, and begotten by the word of truth, and love the truth, and do not delight in lyes, will hear me, and embrace my doctrine and testimony.

Pilate asks him, "What he meant by the truth?" But then, as if suddenly recollecting that it did not belong to him, as a judge, to inquire into such matters, he would not stay for an answer; but bringing Jesus out at the gate again where the Jews stood, he professes he found no fault in him at all, John xviii. from 33 to 39.

The Jews, hearing this, were the more enraged, and said, that "he stirred up the people," teaching and publishing his doctrine through all Jewry, even from Galilee to that very place. Pilate, hearing of Galilee, asked him, if he were a Galilean? and understanding that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod (who was now at Jerusalem, being come up at this time to the feast), and the rather, it is probable, because he supposed Herod, by reason of his knowledge in the Jewish religion, was fitter for the cognizance of this case: and possibly he was desirous to oblige him by this action, so full of respect to him, and thereby remove those old heart-burnings and unkindnesses that had been between them.

He is thereupon forthwith carried before Herod. And now our Saviour sees the monster that had murdered his forerunner John; and Herod sees Jesus, whom he had desired of a long time out of curiosity to see, and now hoped he should have seen some miracle wrought by him. But our Saviour would not vouchsafe so much as any word either to him or the chief priests that vehemently accused him before him. We have seen, that Christ's life was in danger by Herod once before, Luke xiii. 31. yet now, when he hath him in his hands, he lets him go. Only he first abuses him, and mocks him, and arrays him in a gorgeous robe like a mock-king: and he, and his officers, and attendants, set him at nought, and deride him; and, thus treated and handled, he sends him back to Pilate; and so both the governors were that same day made friends.

Our Saviour was thus brought back again before Pilate, who called the chief priests and rulers of the people, and said unto them, "Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people; but upon examination, neither I nor Herod find any fault in him; I will therefore chastise him, and release him." But then it comes into his mind, how he might release him without any chastisement at all, knowing that the chief priests had out of mere envy delivered him unto him. It being a custom (which there was a kind of necessity to comply with, to prevent tumults), that the governor of Judæa should at this great feast release a malefactor, and, he putting them now in mind of it, they desired him to continue this custom to them as he had formerly done; hereupon he makes a motion to them, to have Christ given them in honour of their feast: and the better to accomplish it, he matches him with Barabbas a notorious malefactor; who for insurrection and murder was, with his accomplices, cast into prison; and giving them their choice of these two, he supposed they would have been willing he should rather

release Jesus (as angry as they were with him) than Barabbas; and so leaves it to them, which of these two they would chuse.

Then inquiring what their vote was concerning that matter, the Jews (by the persuasion of the priests) are all for Barabbas: he putting it to the vote again, they are still the same, and cry out, "Not this man, but Barabbas." [See Acts iii. 13, 14.] He tries them a third time, and pleads the innocency of Jesus, and declares, that "he found no crime in him." They were then more instant with loud cries to have him crucified, Luke xxiii. 23. When Pilate saw that all this would not do, he resolved to have him severely scourged, supposing by that lesser punishment to pacify the rage of the Jews, and so to deliver him from the greater.

Hereupon the soldiers led him into the common hall*; and when they had stripped him, they cruelly scourged him. Then they put upon him a scarlet robe†, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and put a reed for a sceptre into his right hand, and, bowing the knee in derision, worshipped him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they spat upon him, and smote him with a reed or cane. When he had been thus cruelly used, Pilate goes out to them again, and tells them, He had brought him forth to them again, that they might know, "he found no fault in him," and therefore could not condemn him. However, he would let them see what he had done to gratify them, and move them to pity. Then came Jesus forth "wearing the crown of thorns," and "the robe:" upon which Pilate said unto them, "Behold the man!" As if he should have said, "You see how miserably he hath been beaten, and shamefully vilified; and therefore if there be any pity or compassion in you, you will now relent toward him, and be satisfied with what he hath suffered, and not desire to have him put to death." But when the chief priests and officers saw him, they cried out importunately, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said unto them, "Take ye him yourselves, and crucify him; for I, for my part, find no fault in him." The Jews answered, that he ought to die by their law, as a blasphemer [Lev. xxiv. 16.], because he made himself the Son of God; whereas he did not make himself so, or only pretend to be so, but indeed was so, namely, the eternal Son of God. When Pilate heard that, he was the more afraid, not knowing but that Christ might be some divine and extraordinary person; and having already cruelly used him, if he should now condemn him, he might rashly draw down divine vengeance on his own head.

Therefore taking him into his judgment hall again, he examines him afresh, asking him, "Whence art thou?" What is thy original or parentage? Christ being unwilling to obstruct his own sufferings; or to discover that which might deter him from proceeding against him, gave him no answer. Pilate, offended at this, says to him, "Speakest thou not to me, who have power to crucify thee, or to absolve thee?" Our Saviour answers, that "he had no power against him," to inflict any punishment on him, were it not that his Father had in his great wisdom, and divine counsel, and for glorious ends, permitted it so to be. And though it was so, yet it was a great aggravation of the sin of Judas and the Jews to deliver him (not only an innocent person, but even the Son of God) into his hands; and therefore, though he would sin heinously in employing his power to crucify him; yet their sin would be greater, who had put him into his power, seeing they had means to know better than he, and so sinned against more light.

This speech of our Saviour so wrought upon Pilate, that he now sought more earnestly to release him than before. But the Jews cried out, "If thou lettest this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." Pilate, hearing them say so, durst stand out no longer; fearing, possibly, if he let Jesus go, they would accuse him to Tiberius, the emperor, as one not true and faithful to him. He therefore now goes, and sits upon another tribunal in

* Though Matthew and Mark mention this part of our Saviour's sufferings after Pilate had pronounced sentence upon him, yet it may appear out of John xix. that these things were done before, and mentioned by those evangelists only by way of recapitulation after the sentence, that they might not interrupt the story of Pilate's proceeding to condemn our Saviour.

† Some think it was some captain's or soldier's coat of a red colour: for the word used by Matthew, properly signifies a soldier's coat.

open view (possibly some place before the palace, where he used to sit in judgment, and pronounce sentence, called by the Jews Gabbatha), and has Jesus brought before him in his scarlet robe and thorny crown; and though he intended to condemn him, yet he resolved to shew that he did it very unwillingly. Being thus set in judgment, he first presents Christ to the Jews, as their King, saying, "Behold your King!" But they scornfully refused him, crying out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him." He urgeth again, how unmeet it was they should desire him to "crucify their King." But they utterly rejected him, saying, "We have no king but Cæsar."

While Pilate is upon the bench, his lady sends to him, that "he should have nothing to do with that just man, for she had suffered many things in her dream concerning him," Matt. xxvii. 19.

Pilate, perceiving that, notwithstanding all that was said in the behalf of Jesus, the Jews were nothing moved thereby, but rather further enraged, inasmuch that they were ready to fall into a tumult, he took and washed his hands before them all, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see you to it." The Jews cried out, "His blood be on us and on our children." Then, willing to content the multitude, he released unto them Barabbas, and gave sentence upon Jesus, "that it should be as they required" [Luke xxiii. 24.] and delivered him over to their will to be crucified, having before, as we have seen, miserably scourged him.

Our Saviour being thus condemned, the Soldiers derided and mocked him at their pleasure; and then taking off the purple robe from him, and putting his own clothes on him, they led him out to crucify him.

Judas, who had betrayed Christ, when he saw that he was condemned, was touched with remorse for what he had done, and brought the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests (which he had received of them), confessing "he had betrayed innocent blood." And when they would not receive this money, he would not carry it back again, but threw it down, and left it as a detestable thing in the temple, and so departed, and went out, and hanged himself. In the doing which, casting himself headlong with violence, it seems, from the place where he had fastened the rope; either that, or the bough of the tree, or whatsoever it was to which he had fastened it, breaking, he fell down, and with the force of the fall burst asunder, and his bowels gushed out in a miserable manner, Acts i. 18.

The sanhedrin or council of the Jews, when they saw the money was thus left in the temple, upon consultation agreed that it should be laid out to buy a piece of ground that had been the potter's (the best part whereof, it is likely, had been taken off for the potter's use), for strangers (probably the Gentiles and Roman soldiers) to bury their dead in, with whom the Jews, it seems, would have no communion, no not after death; for, being the price of blood, it could not be put into the corban, or sacred treasury: wherefore that field was after this called Akeldema; and hereby that prophecy in Zech. xi. 13. was fulfilled: where God, under the parable of a shepherd, demands of the Jews his price or reward for the benefits he had conferred on them in teaching and guiding them, &c. and they wretchedly and ungratefully gave him only thirty pieces of silver, "the price of the life of a servant or slave," Exod. xxi. 32. God, abominating this their ingratitude, commands the prophet to cast the money to the potter; and accordingly the prophet threw it into the temple for the potter. What was here figuratively represented in the time of the prophet, was really acted and accomplished upon the person of our Saviour, the great Shepherd of his flock, 1 Pet. v. 4. for the Jews paid to Judas to betray him into their hands, thirty pieces of silver ("which was the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value"): Judas, being touched with remorse for this heinous fact, brought back the money, and threw it down in the temple, and the chief priests gave it to the potter for his field.

Matthew calls it the prophecy of Jeremiah, because Jeremiah's name stood first in the volume of the prophets, and so came first in their way, when they were speaking of the prophets: so that Matthew, by alleging a text of Zechariah, under the name of Jeremiah,

miah, does but quote the text out of the volume of the prophets, under his name that stood first in that volume. Thus our Saviour, Luke xxvi. 44. calls the whole Hagiographa (containing the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Job, Ruth, Esther) by the title of the Psalms, because the book of Psalms stood first of all the books of that part or division.

They now lead forth our Saviour out of the city, to crucify him [See Heb xiii. 12], And

1. They lay his cross upon him (such engines of death being probably always in readiness); but, finding that he was overburdened with it, they compel Simon a Cyrenian, whom they met in the way, to bear it after him.

2. There were two thieves led with him to be crucified (who, in all likelihood, were some time before condemned), that so his innocence might be the more obscured, by the company of such malefactors, and that the scripture might be fulfilled, Isa. liii. 12. "He was numbered with the transgressors."

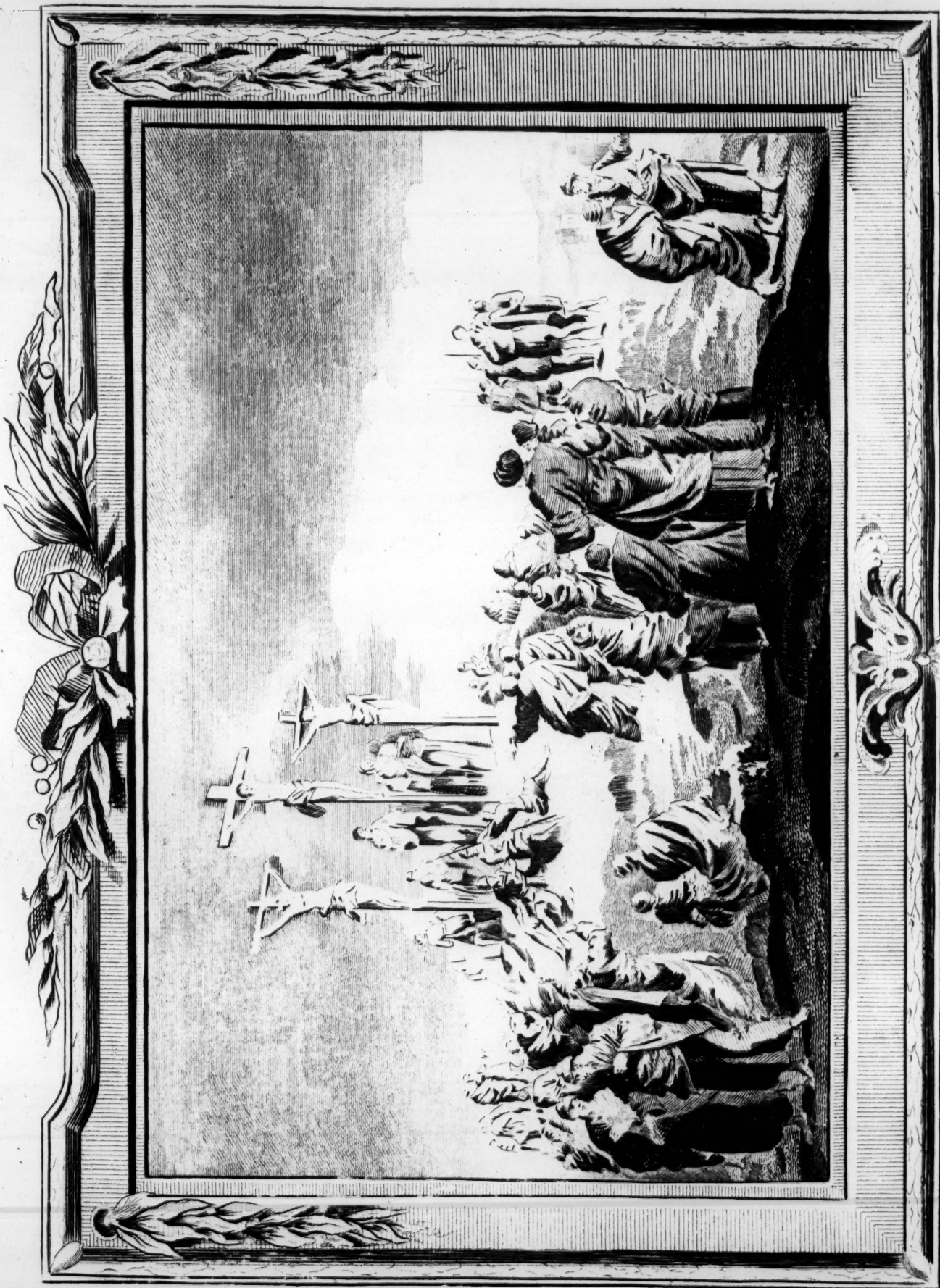
3. There followed a great company of people, and several women well affected to him, who lamented him; to whom he turned and said, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children," foretelling the lamentable destruction that was coming on their city; and adds, that if the Romans did these things to him that was a green tree, and flourished with all divine graces, what would they do to the Jews, that were like a dry tree, and so only fit to be burned, Luke xxiii. from 27 to 32.

4. When they were come to the place of execution, called Golgotha, or Calvary, they gave him a bitter potion to drink, namely, "wine mingled with myrrh" (which is of a bitter taste), as Mark says; or sour and sharp wine, like vinegar, and that "mingled with gall," as Matthew has it. It was, as it seems, an ancient custom to give malefactors, who were ready to suffer, strong wine to drink [see Prov. xxxi. 6.], thereby to refresh and strengthen them, that they might be the less sensible of the pains of death. But the crucifiers of our Saviour, though they did in part observe this custom, yet they did it not in a way of favour to him, but gave him such sour, bitter, and unpleasing kind of drink, that would rather torment and afflict him, than any way comfort or refresh him. And therefore when he had tasted it, he refused to drink of it, because he would not willingly add any thing to the grievousness of his own passion, nor afflict himself further than he was necessitated to do; nor do any thing of his own accord that might hasten his death.

5. Then they stripped him of his cloaths, and lifted him up on the cross, and fastened him to the tree*, placing the two malefactors, one on his right-hand, the other on his left; and being thus nailed to the cross, he prayed, saying, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do," Luke xxiii. 33, 34.

This punishment of crucifying, was, 1. A vile and shameful kind of punishment; for they crucified them naked, excepting only those parts of the body which for decency were covered; and they who thus suffered were usually reproached by the spectators. And our Saviour, as the apostle says, Heb. xii. 2. not only endured the cross, but the shame of it also. 2. It was counted an execrable and an accursed kind of death, especially among

* It is probable, by comparing the Evangelists together, that he was both condemned to death, and also fastened to the cross between the third and sixth hour of the Jewish day, that is, between nine of the clock in the forenoon and twelve. Some think he was condemned about ten of the clock, and fastened to the cross between eleven and twelve. Vid. Suarez. de Christo, tom. 2. p. 416. The Jews, besides the division of the artificial day into twelve lesser hours, divided it also into four larger hours or quarters, or fourth parts of the day; and these four parts or quarters of the day were sometimes called hours, and took their names from that hour at which they began: so the first part or quarter of the day was called the first hour, because it began at the first hour, viz. six in the morning. The second was called the third hour, because it began at the third hour after, viz. at nine of the clock. The third quarter was called the sixth hour, because it began then, viz. at twelve of the clock, or high-noon. The fourth was called the ninth hour, because it began then, viz. at three of the clock in the afternoon. Now whereas John, ch. xix. 14, says, it was about the sixth hour when Pilate sat down upon the judgment-seat to condemn him, and Mark, ch. xv. 25, says, it was the third hour, and "and they crucified him;" it is probable they both spake of one and the same part, and quarter of the day, viz. the second quarter, which Mark calls the third hour, because it began at the third hour, viz. nine of the clock. But John says, it was about the sixth hour, because that quarter ended at the sixth hour, and to shew that the sixth hour was not yet come. Some learned men, (as Camerarius and Danaeus) affirm, that in some ancient copies of the Evangelist John, the words are read thus, *ἡγὰρ ἦν ὥρα ἡ τρίτη*, it was about the third hour; and so that place of John may easily be reconciled with this of Mark.



The CRUCIFIXION.

Turner del.



the Jews, to be hanged on a tree, as appears, Deut. xxi. 23. for it was usually the punishment of such as had by some notorious wickedness provoked God to pour out his wrath upon the whole land, and so were hanged up to appease his wrath; as we may see in those instances, Numb. xxv. 4. and 2 Sam. xxi. 6. and those who were put to this kind of death were accounted execrable and accursed wretches, that defiled the earth with trading on it, and would, as it were, pollute the air while they remained above ground. 3. It was a very painful and grievous kind of punishment: it was *lenta & producta mors*, no speedy, but a lingering, languishing death.

Now it was requisite our Saviour should suffer this kind of punishment: 1. That the types and figures in the Old Testament, which foreshew this, might be fulfilled in him; as particularly that of the Brazen Serpent, Numb. xxi. 8. compared with John iii. 14. 2. That that prophecy, Ps. xxii. 16. might be fulfilled, "They have pierced my hands and my feet." 3. To shew that he voluntarily became "a curse for us," and took upon him the curse and punishment due to us for our sins, that, by bearing it, he might deliver us from the same. See Gal. iii. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Heb. ix. 26, 28.

6. Pilate caused a superscription to be written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and to be put over his head on the cross, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews," that so the people of several nations, that came to the feast at this time, might read and understand it; for it was a custom among the Romans, to put a title or superscription upon the crosses on which malefactors suffered; containing their crimes, and the cause of their death, for the clearing of justice, and shaming the person condemned. The chief priests, disliking this superscription, requested Pilate to alter it: but, by the providence of God over-ruling him, he would not gratify them therein, and so was, unawares, an instrument and means of publishing the truth to all that read this title, or heard of it; and what was intended to brand our Saviour with the crime of usurping an earthly kingdom, really tended to his glory and honour; for hereby he was proclaimed the true Messiah, and spiritual King of the Jews, yea of the whole church, notwithstanding the malicious endeavours of the chief priests to hinder it.

7. Not long after he was fastened to the cross (that is to say, about high-noon), a great and wonderful darkness began, and spread itself all over the land of Judæa, and far beyond, even over other parts, such as is usual in a great eclipse, and continued till three o'clock in the afternoon. Now this was no natural darkness, caused by any natural or ordinary eclipse of the sun, that is, by the interposition of the dark body of the moon, between the sun and the earth: for, falling out at the time of the passover (viz. on the fifteenth day of the month), the moon was then at the full, and opposite to the sun; whereas the sun is never eclipsed, in the course of nature, but in the new of the moon; for then only the sun and moon are in conjunction, as they must always be in an eclipse of the sun: the sun, therefore, was now darkened miraculously by the supernatural and immediate power of God, restraining its beams and radiation; and thus that was fulfilled which we find recorded in Amos viii. 9. (though spoken there to another purpose) "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and will darken the earth in the clear day."

8. They divided his garments into four parts; to every soldier that was employed in the execution, a part. And for the seamless coat (which, being woven or knit, was not fit to be divided) they cast lots whose it should be, as was foretold, Ps. xxii. 18. "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."

9. They that passed by reviled him, and railed on him, wagging their heads [see Ps. xlv. 14. xxxv. 21, 25. Ezek. xxv. 3.], and saying, "O thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it again in three days, save thyself; if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross." They falsely supposed, that because he did not come down from the cross, therefore he could not; whereas the true reason why he would not deliver himself from death, was, that the work of our redemption might not be hindered thereby, Matt. xv. 29, 30.

10. The chief priests also and rulers, with the scribes and elders (that is, some of all the chief rulers of the Jews, both ecclesiastical and civil), mocking and scoffing at him, said among themselves, "He saved others (viz. when he cured the diseased, and raised some

from the dead), himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, the Christ, the chosen of God, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God." See Ps. xxii. 6, 7, 8. But the reason (as we said before) why he did not deliver himself, was not for want of power to do it, but because it was not fit or expedient for him to do it at this time, when it was appointed by God his Father that he should suffer for the sins of men, Matt. xv. 31, 32.

11. The soldiers likewise mocked him, and offered him vinegar, saying, "If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself," Luke xxiii. 36, 37.

12. One of the thieves also reviled him, and cast the same in his teeth which the chief priests and scribes had done before; and, railing at him, said, "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." But the other (having his heart extraordinarily changed and wrought upon by our Saviour, and by what he saw by him on the cross; and having grace given him to repent, and believe in him), rebuked his fellow, saying, "Dost not thou fear God, who takes notice of those that insult over the afflicted, and such as are in misery, especially seeing thou thyself art suffering the same punishment? And indeed both thou and I suffer justly, and receive the due reward of our deeds; but this is a most innocent person, who came to do good to this people, and is thus unjustly and cruelly used by them." And then, turning to our Saviour, he prayed, saying, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." To whom Jesus answered, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," Luke xxiii. from 39 to 44.

13. There stood by his cross his mother (probably at this time a widow, a sword passing through her soul, as Simeon had prophesied, to see her son thus used, Luke ii. 35.) and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas alias Alpheus, and Mary Magdalen, and John the disciple whom he loved. These, it seems, had drawn nearer than the rest, who were looking on him at some distance, as is intimated in Mark xv. 40. and after his death he came to them, and those others of our Saviour's friends and well-wishers, who were there present, Luke xxiii. 49. When Jesus saw his mother, and his beloved disciple standing by, taking notice of her sorrowful and desolate condition, he said to her, "Woman, Behold thy son;" as if he would have said, Look upon John, who from henceforward shall be to thee as a son. And to John he said, "Behold thy mother;" that is, I commend her to thee, and to thy care, even as if she were thy own mother; and from that time John took her home to his house, John xix. 25, 26, 27.

14. Jesus having now hung about three hours on the cross, about the ninth hour (namely, three o'clock in the afternoon), feeling in his soul the burden of God's wrath for our sins, he cried out, "Eli, Eli, Lamazabachani," which is, in Syriac, "My God, my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" and occurs at the beginning of Ps. xxii. in which there are many things typically spoken of Christ. Now for the better understanding of these words, we may observe 1. This forsaking is not understood of his whole person, but of his human nature only: the Godhead of Christ could not be forsaken. 2. He was not forsaken wholly, in regard of all presence or assistance from God: that could not be, so long as the personal union of the Godhead with his manhood continued; and that continued during the time of his passion, and can never be severed or dissolved; so that the Godhead upheld the manhood all the time of his suffering. 3. He was not forsaken in regard of God's love towards him: for God never loved him better than now, when he was most obedient to his will, John x. 17. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life." 4. His faith did not fail, but acted in this very time of his forsaking, as appears by those fiducial words, "My God, my God!" But he was forsaken in this sense, the Godhead did withdraw its comfortable presence and assistance for a time only, and in some degree, from the manhood, now when he suffered on the cross; as before it did, during the time of his inward agony in the garden: God withdrew from him at present the comfortable feeling and manifestation of his love, and left him for a time under a sense of his wrath due to our sins. Therefore he complains not out of any impatience or unwillingness to suffer what his father had laid upon him; but to shew and express the grievousness of his present sufferings and passion, and that special notice might be taken thereof, by

those there present: for, as man, he had a natural desire to be eased and delivered from this burden of God's wrath, lying now so heavy upon him; and this desire might be in him without sin; seeing nature, being oppressed and afflicted, may without sin desire ease and refreshment, so it be with submission to God's will.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS on CHRIST's Crucifixion.

The sentence of death is past, and now who can with dry eyes behold the sad pomp of my Saviour's bloody execution! All the streets are full of gazing spectators, waiting for this rueful sight! At last, O Saviour, there thou comest out of Pilate's gate, bearing that which shall soon bear thee; to expect thy cross was not torment enough, thou must carry it; all this while, thou shalt not only see, but feel thy death before it come: and must help to be an agent in thine own passion. It was not out of favour that, those scornful robes being stripped off, thou art led to death in thine own cloaths. So besmeared was thy face with blood, so swollen and discoloured with buffetings, that thou couldst not have been known but by thy usual habit. Now thine insulting enemies are so much more imperiously cruel, as they are more sure of success. Their merciless tormentings have made thee half dead already; yet now, as if they had done nothing, they begin afresh; and will force thy weakened and fainting nature to new exercises of pain. The transverse of thy cross, at least, is upon thy shoulder: when thou canst scarce go, thou must carry: one kicks thee with his foot; another strikes thee with his staff; another drags thee hastily by thy cord; and more than one spur on thy unpitied weariness with angry commands of haste. Oh true form and state of a servant! All thy former actions, O Saviour, were, though painful, yet free; this, as it is in itself servile, so it is tyrannically enforced; enforced yet more upon thee by thy own love to mankind, than by their power and spite. It was thy Father that laid upon thee the iniquity of us all; it was thine own mercy that caused thee to bear our sins upon the cross; and to bear the cross (with the curse annexed to it) for our sins. How much more voluntary must that needs be in thee, which thou requirest to be voluntarily undertaken by us! It was thy charge, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me." Thou didst not say, 'Let him bear his cross,' as forcibly imposed by another, but, "Let him take up his cross," as his free burden: free, in respect of his heart, not in respect of his hand; so free, that he shall willingly undergo it, when it is laid upon him; not so free as that he shall lay it upon himself unrequired. O Saviour, thou didst not snatch the cross out of the soldiers' hands, and cast it upon thy shoulder; but when they laid it on thy neck, thou underwentst it: the constraint was theirs; the will was thine. It was not so heavy to them, or to Simon, as it was to thee; they felt nothing but the wood, thou feltest it clogged with the load of the sins of the whole world. No marvel if thou faintedst under that sad burden: thou that bearest up the whole earth by thy word, didst sweat and pant and groan under this insupportable carriage: O blessed Jesus, how could I be confounded in myself to see thee, after so much loss of blood, and excess of toil through pain, languishing under that fatal tree! and yet, why should it more trouble me to see thee sinking under thy cross now, than to see thee soon after, hanging upon thy cross? In both, thou wouldst render thyself weak and miserable, that thou mightest so much the more glorify thy infinite mercy in suffering.

It is not out of any compassion of thy misery, or care of thine ease, that Simon of Cyrene is forced to be the porter of thy cross: it was out of their own eagerness of thy dispatch: thy feeble paces were too slow for their purpose; their thirst for thy blood made them impatient of delay. If thou didst wearily struggle with the burden of thy shame along the streets of Jerusalem, when thou comest once past the gates a helper shall be deputed to thee; the expedition of thy death was more sweet to them, than the pain of a lingering passage. What thou saidst to Judas, they say to the executioner, "What thou

thou doest, do quickly:" while thou yet livest, they cannot be quiet, they cannot be safe; to hasten thine end, they lighten thy burden.

Hadst thou done this out of choice, which thou didst out of constraint, how I should have envied thee, O Simon of Cyrene, as too happy in the honour to be the first man that bore that cross of thy Saviour; wherein millions of blessed martyrs have, since that time, been ambitious to succeed thee. Thus to bear thy cross for thee, O Saviour, was more than to bear a crown from thee. Could I be worthy to be thus graced by thee, I should view with contempt and pity all other glories.

While thou thus passest, Oh dear Jesus, the streets and ways resound not all with one note. If the malicious Jews and cruel soldiers insulted thee, and either hailed, or railed on thee, with a bitter violence, thy faithful followers were no less loud in their moans, and ejaculations; neither would they endure that the noise of their cries and lamentations should be drowned with the clamour of the reproaches of thine enemies: but, especially thy blessed mother, and those other zealous associates of her own sex, were the most passionate in their wailings. And why should I think, that all that devout multitude, who so lately cried Hosanna in the streets, did not also bear their part in these public condolences? Though it had not concerned thyself, O Saviour, thine ears had been still more open to the voice of grief than of malice: and so thy lips also are open to the one, shut to the other: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." Who would not have thought, O Saviour, that thou shouldst have been wholly taken up with thine own sorrows! the expectation of so bitter a death had been enough to have overwhelmed any soul but thine; yet even now can thy gracious eye find time to look beyond thine own miseries, at theirs; and to pity them, who, insensible of their own ensuing condition, mourned for thy present sufferings. They see thine extremity, thou foreseest theirs: they pour out their sorrow upon thee, thou retorest it upon themselves. We silly creatures walk blindfolded in this vale of tears, and little know what evil is coming upon us: only what we feel we know; and, while we feel nothing, can find leisure to bestow our compassion on those who need it perhaps less than ourselves. Even now, O Saviour, when thou wert within the view of thy Calvary, thou canst foresee and pity the devastation of thy Jerusalem: and givest a melancholy prediction of the imminent destruction of that city which lately had cost thee tears, and now shall cost thee blood: not all the indignant cruelty of men can rob thee of thy mercy.

Jerusalem could not want malefactors, though Barabbas was dismissed. That all this execution might seem to be done out of a zeal for justice, two capital offenders, adjudged to the gibbet, shall accompany thee, O Saviour, both to thy death, and in it: they are led manacled after thee, as less criminal; no stripes had disabled them from bearing their own crosses. Long ago was this unmeet society foretold by thine evangelical seer; "He was taken from prison, and from judgment: he was cut out of the land of the living; he made his grave with the wicked." O blessed Jesus, it had been disparagement enough to thee, to be associated with the best of men (since there is much sin in the perfectest, and there could be no sin in thee); but to be matched with the scum of mankind, whom vengeance would not suffer to live, is such an indignity as confounds my thoughts. Surely, there is no angel in heaven but would have been proud to attend thee; and what could the earth afford worthy of thy train? yet malice hath suited thee with company next to hell; that their viciousness might reflect upon thee, and their sin might stain thine innocence! Ye are deceived, O ye fond judges; this is the way to grace your dying malefactors; this is not the way to disgrace him, whose guiltlessness and perfection triumphed over your injustice: his presence was able to make your thieves happy; their presence could no more blemish him than your own. Thus guarded, thus attended, thus accompanied, art thou, blessed Jesus, led to that loathsome and infamous hill, which now thy last blood shall make sacred; now thou settest thy foot upon that rising ground, which shall precede thine Olivet: whence thy soul shall first ascend into thy glory.

There, while thou art addressing thyself for thy last act, thou art presented with that bitter and farewell potion wherewith dying malefactors were wont to have their senses stupified, that they might not feel the torments of their execution. It was but the com-
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mon mercy of men to alleviate the death of offenders; since it is not intended that their last doom should be so much pain, as dissolution.

That draught, O Saviour, was not more welcome to the guilty, than hateful unto thee. In the vigour of all thy inward and outward senses, thou wouldst encounter the most-violent assaults of death, and scornedst to abate the least touch of thy quickest apprehension. Thou well knewest that the work thou wentest about, would require the use of all thy powers: it was not thine ease that thou foughtest, but our redemption; neither didst thou mean to yield to thy last enemy, but resist and overcome him; which that thou mightest do the more gloriously, thou challengedst him to do his worst; and, in the mean time, would not unfurnish thyself of any of thy powerful faculties. This greatest combat that ever was, shall be fought on even hand; neither wouldst thou steal that victory which thou now atchievedst over death and hell. Thou didst but touch at this cup; it is a far bitterer than this that thou art now drinking up to the dregs. Thou refusedst that which was offered thee by men; but that which was mixed by thine eternal Father (though mere gall and wormwood), thou didst drink up to the last drop; and therein, O blessed Jesus, lies all our health and salvation; I know not whether I do more suffer in thy pain, or rejoice in the issue of thy suffering.

Now, even now, O Saviour, art thou entering into those dreadful lists; and now art thou grappling with thy last enemy; as if thou hadst not suffered till now, now thy bloody passion begins; a cruel depredation begins that violence. Again do these grim and merciless soldiers lay their rude hands upon thee, and strip thee naked; again are those bleeding weals laid open to all eyes; again must thy sacred body undergo an abhorred nakedness: lo, thou that clothest man with raiment, beasts with hides, fishes with scales and shells, earth with flowers, heaven with stars, art despoiled of cloaths; and standest exposed to the scorn of all beholders. As the first Adam entered into his paradise, so dost thou, the second Adam, into thine, naked; and as the first Adam was cloathed with innocence, when he had no cloaths, so wert thou the second, too, and more than so; thy nakedness, O Saviour, cloaths our souls, not with innocence only, but with beauty; hadst not thou been naked, we had been cloathed with confusion; O happy nakedness, whereby we are covered from shame! O happy shame, whereby we are invested with glory! All the beholders stand wrapped with warm garments, thou only art stripped to tread the wine-press alone. How did thy blessed mother now wish her veil upon thy shoulders; and that disciple, who lately ran naked from thee, wish in vain that his loving pity might do that for thee, which fear forced him to do for himself.

Shame is succeeded with pain. Oh the torment of the cross! Methinks I see and feel how, having fastened the transverse to the body of that fatal tree, and laid it upon the ground, they racked and strained thy tender and sacred limbs, to fit the extent of their fore-appointed measure: and having distorted thine arms beyond their natural reach, how they fastened them with cords; till those strong iron nails (which were driven up to the head, through the palms of thy blessed hands) had not more firmly than painfully fixed thee to thy gibbet. The tree is raised up, and now not without a vehement concussion settled in the mortise. Woe is me, how are thy joints and sinews torn and stretched till they crack again, by this torturing distension! how doth thine own weight torment thee, while thy whole body rests upon this forced and dolorous hold; till thy nailed feet bear their part in a no less afflictive support! how did the rough iron pierce thy soul while, passing through those tender, and sensible parts, it carried thy flesh before it, and as it were rivetted it to that shameful tree!

There now, O dear Jesus, there thou hankest, between heaven and earth, naked, bleeding, forlorn, despicable! the spectacle of miseries, the scorn of men! Be abashed, O ye heavens and earth! and, all ye creatures, wrap up yourselves in horror and confusion, to see the shame and pain and curse of your most pure and omnipotent Creator. How could ye subsist, while he thus suffers, in whom ye are? Oh Saviour, didst thou take flesh for our redemption to be thus indignantly used, thus mangled, thus tortured! Was this measure fit to be offered to that sacred body, that was conceived by the Holy Ghost of the pure substance of an immaculate virgin! Woe is me, that which was unspotted with sin,

is all blemished with human cruelty; and so woefully disfigured, that the blessed mother who bore thee could not have known thee; so bloody were thy temples, so swollen and discoloured was thy face; so was the skin of thy whole body streaked with red and blue stripes; so did thy thorny diadem shade thine heavenly countenance; so did the streams of thy blood cover and deform all thy parts! The eye of sense could not distinguish thee, O dear Saviour, in the nearest proximity to thy cross; the eye of faith sees thee in all this distance; and by how much more ignominy, deformity, pain, it finds in thee, so much more it admires the glory of thy mercy. Alas! is this the head that is decked by thine eternal Father with a crown of pure gold, of immortal and incomprehensible majesty, which is now incircled with prickly thorns? Is this the eye that saw the heavens opened, and the Holy Ghost descending upon that head; that saw such splendence of heavenly brightness on mount Tabor, which now begins to be overclouded with death! Are these the ears that heard the voice of thy Father, owning thee out of heaven; which now tingle with buffetings, and glow with reproaches, and bleed with thorns! Are these the lips that spake as never man spake; full of grace and power; that called out dead Lazarus, that ejected the stubbornest devils, that commanded the cure of all diseases, which now are swollen with blows, and discoloured with blueness and blood! Is this the face that should be fairer than the sons of men, which the angels of heaven so desired to see, and can never be satisfied with seeing; that is thus foul with the nasty mixtures of sweat and blood and spittings on! Are these the hands that stretched out the heavens as a curtain, that by their touch healed the lame, the deaf, the blind; which are now bleeding with the nails! Are these the feet which walked lately upon the liquid pavement of the sea, before whose footstool all the nations of the earth are commanded to worship; that are now so painfully fixed to the cross! O cruel and unthankful men, that offered such measure to the Lord of life! Oh infinitely merciful Saviour, that would suffer all this for unthankful sinners! That fiends should do these things to guilty souls, it is (though terrible, yet) just; but that men should do thus to the blessed Son of God, it is beyond the capacity of our horror.

Even the most hostile dispositions have been content only to kill; death hath sated the most eager malice; thine enemies, O Saviour, held not themselves satisfied, unless they might enjoy thy torment. Two thieves are appointed to be thy companions in death; thou art appointed to the midst, as the chief malefactor; on which soever hand thou lookest, thine eye meets with an hateful partner! But, O blessed Jesus, how shall I enough admire and celebrate thy infinite mercy, who madest so happy an use of this Jewish enmity, as to improve it to the occasion of the salvation of one, and the comfort of millions! Is not this, as the last, so the greatest special instance of thy wonderful compassion, to convert that dying thief? with those nailed hands to snatch a soul out of the mouth of hell! Lord, how I bless thee for this work! how do I stand amazed at this, above all other the demonstrations of thy goodness and power! The offender came to die; nothing was in his thoughts but his guilt and torment; while he was yet in his blood, thou saidst, "This soul shall live." Before ever the intoxicating potion could have time to work upon his brain, thy spirit infuses faith into his heart: he that before had nothing in his eye but present death and torture, is now lifted up above his cross, in a blessed ambition, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Is this the voice of a thief, or of a disciple? Give me leave, O Saviour, to borrow thine own words: "Verily, I have not found so great faith, no not in all Israel." He saw thee hanging miserably by him, and yet styles thee "Lord;" he saw thee dying, yet talks of thy kingdom; he felt himself dying, yet talks of a future remembrance! O faith stronger than death, that can look beyond the cross, at a crown; beyond dissolution, at a remembrance of life and glory! Which of thine eleven were heard to speak so gracious a word to thee in these last pangs? After thy resurrection, and knowledge of thine impassible condition, it was not strange for them to talk of thy kingdom; but in the midst of thy shameful death, for a dying malefactor to speak of thy reigning: and so implore the remembrance of himself in thy kingdom, this is such an improvement of faith, as ravishes my soul with admiration. O blessed thief, that hast thus happily stolen heaven! how hath thy Saviour made thee worthy to be a partner of his sufferings,

sufferings, a pattern of undauntable belief, a spectacle of unspeakable mercy! "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Before, I wondered at thy faith; now, I envy thy felicity. Thou cravest a remembrance, thy Saviour speaks of a present possession, "This day." Thou suedst for remembrance as a favour to the absent, thy Saviour speaks of thy presence with him. Thou speakest of a kingdom; thy Saviour, of paradise. As no disciple could be more faithful, so no saint could be happier. Precious Saviour, what a precedent is this of thy free and powerful grace! where thou wilt give, what unworthiness can bar us from mercy? when thou wilt give, what time can prejudice our vocation? who can despair of thy goodness, when he, who in the morning was posting towards hell, is in the evening with thee in paradise! "Lord;" he could not have spoken this to thee, but by thee, and from thee. What possibility was there for a thief to think of thy kingdom, without thy Spirit? That good Spirit of thine, which breathed upon this man, breathed not upon his fellow; their trade was alike, their state alike, their cross alike; only thy mercy makes them unlike; one is taken, the other refused: blessed be thy mercy in taking one; blessed be thy justice in leaving the other: who can despair of that mercy? who cannot but tremble at that justice!

Now, O ye cruel priests and elders of the Jews, ye have full leisure to feed your eyes with the sight ye so much longed for; there is the blood ye purchased; and is not your malice yet glutted? Is not all this enough without all your taunts and scoffs and revilings at so exquisite a misery? The people, the passengers are taught to insult, where they should pity; every man hath a scorn ready to cast at a dying innocent. A generous nature is more wounded with the tongue, than with the hand. O Saviour, thine ear was more painfully pierced than thy brows, or hands, or feet: it could not but go deep into thy soul, to hear those bitter and girding reproaches from them thou camest to save.

But, alas! what flea-bites were these in comparison of those inward torments which thy soul felt, in the sense and apprehension of thy Father's wrath for the sins of the whole world; which now lay heavy upon thee for satisfaction! This, Oh this was it that pressed thy soul as it were to the nethermost hell. While thine eternal Father looked lovingly upon thee, what didst thou, what needest thou to care for the frowns of men or devils? but when he once turned his face from thee, or bent his brows upon thee, this, this was worse than death. It is no marvel, now, if darkness were upon the face of the whole earth, when thy Father's face was eclipsed from thee, by the interposition of our sins. How should there be light in the world without, when the God of the world, the Father of lights, complains of the want of light within! That word of thine, O Saviour, was enough to fetch the sun down out of heaven, and to dissolve the whole frame of nature, when thou criedst, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Oh what pangs were those, dear Jesus, that drew from thee this complaint! thou well knewest, nothing could be more cordial to thine enemies, than to hear this sad language from thee; they could see but the outside of thy sufferings: never could they have conceived so deep an anguish of thy soul, if thy own lips had not expressed it; yet, as not regarding their triumph, thou thus pourest out thy sorrow; and when so much is uttered, who can conceive what is felt!

How is it then, with thee, O Saviour, that thou thus astonishest men and angels with so woeful a querulation? Had thy God left thee? Thou, not long since, saidst, "I and my Father are one." Are ye now severed? Let this thought be as far from my soul, as my soul from hell. No more can thy blessed Father be separated from thee, than from his own essence: his union with thee is eternal; his vision was intercepted: he could not withdraw his presence, he would withdraw the influence of his comfort. Thou, the second Adam, didst stand for mankind upon this tree of the cross, as the first Adam stood and fell for mankind under the tree of offence. Thou barest our sins; thy Father saw us in thee, and would punish us in thee, thee for us; how could he but withhold comfort, where he intended chastisement! Herein, therefore, he seems to forsake thee for the present, in that he would not deliver thee from that bitter passion which thou wouldst undergo for us. O sweet Saviour, hadst thou not been thus forsaken, we had perished. Thy dereliction is our safety; and how incapable soever our narrow souls are of conceiving thy pain and horror, yet we know there can be no danger in the forsaking, while thou canst say,

say, "My God!" He is so thy God, as he cannot be ours; all our right is by adoption, his by nature: thou art one with him in eternal essence; we come in by grace and merciful election; yet, while thou shalt enable me to say, "My God!" I shall hope never to sink under thy desertions.

But, while I am thus transported with the sense of thy sufferings, O Saviour, let me not forget to admire those endearing mercies of thine, which thou pouredst out upon thy persecutors. They rejoice in thy death, and triumph in thy misery; and scoff at thee, in both. Instead of calling down fire from heaven upon them, thou heapest coals of warmest love upon their heads; "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." They blaspheme thee, thou prayest for them; they scorn, thou pitiest; they sin against thee, thou prayest for their forgiveness: they profess their malice, thou pleadest their ignorance. O compassion without example, without measure! fit for the Son of God, the Saviour of men. Wicked and foolish Jews, ye would be miserable, he will not let you: ye would fain pull upon yourselves the guilt of his blood, he deprecates it: ye kill, he sues for your remission and life: his tongue cries louder than his blood, "Father, forgive them!" O Saviour, thou couldst not but be heard; they who out of ignorance and simplicity thus persecuted thee, find the happy issue of thine intercession: now I see whence it was that three thousand souls were converted, soon after, at one sermon; it was not Peter's speech, it was thy prayer, that was thus effectual: now they have grace to know and confess whence they have both forgiveness and salvation; and can recompense their blasphemies with thanksgiving. What sin is there, Lord, whereof I can despair of the remission? or what offence can I be unwilling to remit, when thou prayest for the forgiveness of thy murderers and blasphemers?

There is no day so long but hath its evening. At last, O blessed Saviour, thou art drawing to an end of these painful sufferings, when, spent with toil and torment, thou criest out, "I thirst." How shouldst thou do otherwise, O dear Jesus; how shouldst thou do otherwise than thirst? The night thou hadst spent in watching, in prayer, in agony, in thy conveyance from the garden to Jerusalem; from Annas to Caiaphas, from Caiaphas to Pilate; in thy restless answers, in buffetings, and stripes: the day, in arraignments, in halting from place to place, in scourgings, in stripping, in robing and disrobing, in bleeding, in tugging under thy cross, in woundings and distension, in pain and passion! No marvel if thou thirstedst; although there was no more in this draught, than thy need; it was no less requisite thou shouldst thirst, than that thou shouldst die; both were upon the same predetermination, both upon the same prediction; how else should that word be verified; Ps. xxii. 14, 15. "All my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels; my strength is dried up like a potsherd and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death!" Had it not been to make up that word, whereof one jot cannot pass, though thou hadst felt this thirst, yet thou hadst not discovered it. Alas, what could it avail to bemoan thy wants to insulting enemies, whose sport was thy misery? How should they pity thy thirst that pitied not thy bloodshed? It was not their favour that thou expectedst herein, but their conviction. O Saviour, how can we, thy sinful servants, think much to be exercised with hunger and thirst, when we hear thee thus mournfully complain!

Thou that not long since proclaimedst in the temple, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink; he that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters," now thyself thirstest. Thou, in whom we believe, complainedst to want some drops; thou who hadst the command of all the waters both above the firmament and below it; yet thou wouldst thirst. Even so, Lord, thou that wouldst die for us, wouldst thirst for us; O give me to thirst after those waters which thou promisedst, whatever become of those waters which thou wouldst want. The time was when, craving water of the Samaritan, thou gavest better than that thou askedst; oh give me to thirst after that more precious water; and so do thou give me of that water of life, that I may never thirst again.

Blessed God, how marvellously dost thou contrive thine own affairs! thine enemies, while they would exercise their malice on thee, shall unknowingly justify thee, and convince

vince themselves. As thou before, in thy word, saidst, "In thy thirst, they gave thee vinegar to drink." Had they given thee wine, thou hadst not taken it; the night before thou hadst taken leave of that comfortable liquor, resolving to drink no more of that sweet juice till thou shouldst drink it new with thy disciples in thy Father's kingdom: had they given thee water, they had not fulfilled that prediction, whereby they were self-condemned. I know not, now, O dear Jesus, whether this last draught of thine were more pleasing to thee, or more distasteful; distasteful in itself (for what liquor could be equally harsh?) pleasing, in that it made up those sufferings thou wert to endure, and those prophecies thou wert to fulfil.

Now there is no more to do, thy full consummation of all predictions, of all types and ceremonies, of all sufferings, of all satisfactions, is happily both effected and proclaimed: nothing now remains but a voluntary, sweet, and heavenly resignation of thy blessed soul into the hands of thine eternal Father, and a bowing of thine head, for the change of a better crown, and a peaceable sound sleep in thy bed of ease and honour, and an instant entrance into rest, triumph, and glory.

And now, O blessed Jesus, how easily have carnal eyes, all this while, mistaken the passages and intentions of this thy last and most glorious work! Our weakness could hitherto see nothing here but pain and ignominy; now, my better-enlightened eyes see, in this elevation of thine, both honour and happiness. Lo, thou who art the Mediator betwixt God and man, the Reconciler of heaven and earth, art lifted up betwixt earth and heaven, that thou mightest unite and reconcile both. Thou that art the great Captain of our salvation, the Conqueror of all the adverse powers of death and hell, art exalted upon this triumphal chariot of the cross, that thou mightest trample upon death, and drag all those infernal principalities in chains after thee. Those arms which thine enemies meant violently to extend, are stretched forth for the embracing of all mankind, who shall be made partakers of the benefit of thine all-sufficient redemption: even while thou sufferest, thou reignest. Oh the impotent madness of silly men! they think to disgrace thee with wry faces, with putting out their tongues, with bitter scoffs, with poor wretched indignities, when, in the mean time, the heavens declare thy righteousness, O Lord, and the earth shews forth thy power." The sun draws in his light, as not abiding to see the sufferings of his Creator; the earth trembles under the sense of the wrong done to her Maker; the rocks rend, the veil of the temple is severed from the top to the bottom; and, in short, the universal frame of the world acknowledges the dominion of that Son of God, whom man despised.

Earth and hell have now done their worst. O Saviour, thou art in thy paradise; and triumphest over the malice of men and devils. The remains of thy sacred person are not yet free. The soldiers have parted thy garments, and cast lots upon thy seamless coat (those poor spoils cannot so much enrich them, as glorify thee; whose scriptures are fulfilled by their barbarous rapacity). The Jews sue to have thy bones divided; but they sue in vain; no more could thy garments be whole, than thy body could be broken; one inviolable decree over-rules both. Foolish executioners, ye look up at that crucified body, as if it were altogether in your power and mercy; nothing appears to you but impotence and death; little do ye know what an irresistible guard there is upon that sacred corpse; such, as if all the powers of darkness should league against, they shall find themselves confounded; in spite of all the gates of hell, that word shall stand, "Not a bone of him shall be broken."

Still the infallible decree of the Almighty leads you on to his own ends, through your own ways. Ye saw him already dead, whom ye came to dispatch: those bones, therefore, shall be whole, which ye had no power to break; but yet, that no piece, either of your cruelty or of divine prediction, may remain unsatisfied; he whose bones may not be impaired, shall be wounded in his flesh; he whose ghost was yielded up, must yield his last blood: "One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side; and forthwith there came out blood and water." Malice is wont to end with life; here it outlives it. Cruel man, what means this so late wound? What commission hadst thou for this bloody act? Pilate had given thee leave to break the bones of the living, he gave no leave to gore the side of the

dead: what wicked supererogation is this! What a superfluity of maliciousness! To what purpose did thy spear pierce so many hearts in that one? why wouldst thou kill a dead man? Methinks the blessed virgin, and those other heart-pierced associates of hers, and the disciple whom Jesus loved, together with the other of his fellows, the friends and followers of Christ; and especially he that was so ready to draw his sword upon the troop of his Master's apprehenders, should have work enough to contain themselves within the bounds of patience, at so savage a stroke: their sorrow could not choose but turn to indignation; and their hearts could not but rise (as even mine doth now) at so impertinent a villany. How easily could I rave at that rude hand! But, O God, when I look up to thee, and consider how thy holy and wise providence so over-rules the most barbarous actions of men, that, contrary to their will, they turn beneficial, I can at once hate them and bless thee. This very wound hath a mouth to speak the Messiahship of my Saviour, and the truth of thy scripture, "They shall look at him whom they have pierced." Behold now the second Adam sleeping, and out of his side formed the mother of the living, the evangelical church: behold the rock which was smitten, and the waters of life gushed forth: behold the fountain that is set open to the house of David, for sin and uncleanness; a fountain not of water only, but of blood too. O Saviour, by thy water we are washed, by thy blood we are redeemed. Those two sacraments, which thou didst institute when alive, flow also from thee, dead, as the last memorials of thy love to the church. The water of baptism, which is the laver of regeneration; the blood of the New Testament, shed for remission of sins; and these, together with the Spirit that gives life to them both, are the three witnesses on earth, whose attestation cannot fail us. Oh precious and sovereign wound, by which our souls are healed! Into this cleft of the rock let my dove fly, and enter; and there safely hide herself from the talons of all the birds of prey!

It could not be but that the death of Christ contrived, and acted at Jerusalem in so solemn a festival, must needs draw a world of beholders. The Romans, the centurion and his band, were there as actors, as overseers of the execution; those strangers were no otherwise engaged, than as they that would hold fair correspondence with the citizens, where they were ingarrisoned: their freedom from prejudice rendered them more capable of an ingenuous construction of all events; "Now, when the centurion and they that were with him that watched Jesus, saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, they feared greatly, and glorified God, and said, Truly this was the Son of God!"

What a marvellous concurrence is here of strong and irrefragable convictions! Meekness in suffering; prayer for his murderers; a faithful resignation of his soul into the hands of his heavenly Father; the sun eclipsed, the heavens darkened, the earth trembling, the graves open, the rocks rent, the veil of the temple torn: who could utter less than this, "Truly this was the Son of God!" He suffers patiently; this is through the power of grace; and many good men have done so, through his enabling; and the frame of nature suffers with him; this is proper to the God of nature, the Son of God.

The centurion, or Roman captain, who commanded the party of soldiers who were appointed by Pilate to see the execution done on our Saviour, standing over-against him, beholding what passed, and the manner of his dying, and how he cried out, and gave up the ghost, glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous man! truly this was the Son of God!" as he professed himself to be. Our Saviour, as we have seen before, was condemned to death by the Jews for professing himself the Son of God; and here behold the centurion avouches that "he was indeed the Son of God," and consequently that he was unjustly condemned.

Then immediately these four prodigious things ensued to honour our Saviour at his death, who had been so much abused before. 1. "The veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom." This was a large covering, hung up in manner of a curtain, in the inside of the temple, which was made of blue, purple, crimson, and fine linen, and was curiously wrought or embroidered with cherubims upon it, 2 Chron. iii. 14. and by this veil (as by a partition) the sanctuary or holy place was divided and severed from the holy of holies, into which only the high priest, and that but once a year, might enter to offer

offer sacrifice for his own and the people's sins. Now this veil was miraculously rent by the power of God, from the top to the bottom, possibly, to signify and shew, 1. That now, by the death of Christ, all legal and ceremonial worship formerly in use, and performed in the temple, was abrogated, see Eph. ii. 15. Col. ii. 14. 2. That there was now a way opened for all true believers to enter into heaven; for the holy of holies within the veil (which was before close shut up, so as neither priests nor people could enter there, but only the high priest once a year) was a type of heaven, Heb. ix. 24. Therefore, Heb. x. 19. the apostle says, that "we have boldness or liberty to enter into the holiest (that is, into heaven) by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, that he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." 3. That now a clearer knowledge of Christ, and the way of salvation by him, should be revealed by the ministry of the gospel, than was before in the time of the law, see 2 Cor. iii. 12, 13. 2. That there was an earthquake. 3. The rocks were rent. These were signs of God's anger against the Jews, and of Christ's divine majesty, Ps. cxiv. 7. xviii. 7, 8. 4. The graves were opened. The grave-stones, it seems, were now moved away, though the dead bodies there interred came not out till after the resurrection of our Saviour, whom the apostle calls "the first fruits of them that slept." 1 Cor. xv. 20. and "the first born from the dead," Col. i. 18. but at that other earthquake, at which Christ's sepulchre was opened, then many bodies of pious persons, who had been dead, arose out of their graves, and went into the city of Jerusalem (called the holy city, because it was the seat of divine worship), and were there seen and known by many, and appeared as witnesses of Christ's resurrection, and possibly attended him to heaven at his ascension: and hereby was shewed that our Saviour had overcome death, not only in his own person, but for us also. This may give us assurance of our own resurrection, by virtue of his; and further, by this we may see, that he is the Saviour of all those who believed in him before his incarnation, and died in hope to be saved by him, as well as of those who believed in him since; and that the former are partakers of the fruit and benefit of his death and resurrection, no less than the latter.

These astonishing events not only exceedingly affected the centurion, but also the people who came together to that sight, insomuch that they "smote their breasts," and returned with a deep sorrow and remorse for what was done, Luke xxiii. 48.

Towards the evening the Jews besought Pilate, who only had power to dispose of the bodies of condemned persons, that the legs of the crucified persons might be broken, to hasten their death, that so they might be removed, and taken away and buried: the reason of which desire was, because according to the law, Deut. xxi. 22, 23. "the land was defiled with those who were hanged," especially if not timely buried; and they judged, if the body of these persons remained on the cross all that night, and on the next sabbath (which was an high-day, the ordinary sabbath and first day of the feast of unleavened bread concurring), it might pollute both them and their feast. Pilate granting their desire, the soldiers came, and brake the legs of the two thieves; but not of Jesus, because he was already dead; yet one of them with a spear pierced his side, and there came out straitway blood* and water. This the Evangelist John avouches to be most true, and expressly asserts the same for the confirmation of the faith of others. And he shews that by these actions of the soldiers, that was done by which that scripture was fulfilled, Exod. xii. 46. "Neither shall ye break a bone thereof†," Christ being in this, as in other things, the Antitype of the paschal lamb; as also that other scripture, Zech. xii. 10. "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced;" for the malice of the Jews was the chief wheel that moved in this matter, and set Pilate and the soldiers on work, and

* Which may point out to us, that it is he who came by water and by blood, 1 John v. 6. and that, from the merit and efficacy of his death, there floweth out blood for the obtaining remission, and for sprinkling and quieting the conscience; and water to regenerate and wash us from our uncleanness.

† The Israelites going out of Egypt in great haste, they might not stay to break the bones of the paschal lamb, and eat the marrow, which pointed out this, that Christ should not be broken under his sufferings, but his bones kept whole, as being shortly to rise again and triumph over death. And to this also may that passage Ps. liv. 20. be applied.

therefore

therefore they are said to crucify him by these soldiers' hands, Acts ii. 36. And this was fulfilled (as some think) partly in those Jews, who, having put Christ to death, were afterwards converted to him, Acts ii. 37. and looked upon him with the eye of faith, as the wounded Israelites did on the brazen serpent; and partly shall be fulfilled at the last day, when all impenitent persons shall see him as their judge, Rev. i. 7. Mat. xxvi. 64. Yet others think there is in that prediction a promise contained of a more full conversion of the Jews in the latter days, whose ancestors thus pierced and crucified our blessed Saviour.

C H A P T E R XIV.

CHRIST'S BURIAL, BY JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA. THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. HE APPEARS TO THE TWO DISCIPLES GOING TO EMMAUS; AND AFTERWARDS TO THE ELEVEN. DEFENCE OF THE RESURRECTION AGAINST THE DEISTS. CHRIST'S SIXTH APPEARANCE TO HIS DISCIPLES, THOMAS BEING PRESENT. HIS SEVENTH APPEARANCE AT THE SEA OF TIBERIAS. EIGHTH APPEARANCE ON THE MOUNT IN GALILEE. HIS NINTH APPEARANCE ON THE FORTIETH DAY. CHRIST'S ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN.

WHEN the evening was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea (an honourable person, one of the great council of the Jews, a good and righteous man, who had not consented to the counsel or deed of them who condemned, and caused our Saviour to be put to death), being a disciple of Jesus before (but secretly, for fear of the Jews, who had determined to excommunicate all that should confess him to be the Christ, John ix. 22), and one who "waited* for the kingdom of God," that is, "for the manifestation of Christ the Messiah in the flesh," and for that spiritual kingdom, and royal government, which he by the special appointment of the Father was to exercise in and over the church, Ps. ii. 6, 7. having a desire to bury our Saviour's body with due honour (not fearing now the displeasure of the chief priests and scribes), but being grown more courageous in the cause of Christ, "went boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus." Pilate at first seemed to doubt whether he could be so soon dead, having hung but three or four hours on the cross; but understanding by the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to him. Joseph, having obtained his desire, came presently, and took the body of Jesus down, and bought fine linen to wrap it in. And in this action Nicodemus, a ruler of the people, and also a member of the council (John xii. 42. iii. 1. and vii. 50.), joined with him, and brought myrrh and aloes and fine spices, a great quantity, for the same purpose, and both together wound his body in the linen cloth, with the spices applied outwardly; so that the body was (as it were) wrapt up in them, after the Jewish custom, who used not to disembowel the dead, but thus to perfume and embalm them; and being in haste (by reason of the approaching sabbath), it is likely they did it not so exactly as otherwise they would have done. Then they laid the body in Joseph's new sepulchre, which was hewn out of a rock in a garden (see 2 Kings xxi. 18.) which he had, near the place where our Saviour suffered, wherein never any was laid before, and they shut up the sepulchre, by rolling a great stone to the door or entrance of it. Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and other religious women (Luke xxiii. 55.) who came from Galilee, followed him to his grave, and, being there present, carefully observed where his body was laid, and also how it was laid into the sepulchre, and went and prepared spices and ointments for his further embalming, when the sabbath was over, purposing to do it more exactly and accurately (out of their singular love to him) than Joseph and Nicodemus could lately do for want of time.

* As old Simeon waited for the consolation of Israel, that is, for the coming of the Messiah, and for the benefit and comfort which the church should have by his coming, viz. the benefit of redemption and salvation.



The SEPULCHRE of CHRIST.



The next day the chief priests and Pharisees came to Pilate, and besought him, that he would give order that the sepulchre might be secured till the third day was over, lest any of his disciples should come by night and steal away his body, because that deceiver (so they maliciously termed him) had said in his life time, that "he would rise the third day." Possibly they intended then to have shewed his body to the people, hoping to have convinced them of his untruth in that particular, which would have weakened the credit of all the rest of his doctrine. Pilate tells them, they might take some of the garrison soldiers appointed for the guard of the temple, and set them to watch the sepulchre, or make use of any other means they could devise to secure it. Hereupon they went and sealed the stone with the public seal; which prohibited any to remove it, or meddle with it, under pain of the violation of Cæsar's authority [see Dan. vi. 17.], and set a watch to guard the sepulchre. So that Christ's body was kept safe in the grave under a three-fold guard, namely, of the stone, the seal, and the watch.

The Lord of life was buried (as we have seen) on that day on which he was crucified, and his body was in the grave some part of that day, and all the next day, and some part of the day following; so that he was two nights, and one whole day, and two small parts of two more under death: therefore he is said to be three days and three nights in the grave, because the whole time or space of three days is put for a part of it, by a Synecdoche; which thing was long before prefigured in Jonas; for "as he was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so Christ was to be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," Matt. xii. 40. and this he had divers times before foretold, as John ii. 19. and Mark viii. 31. ix. 31. x. 34. It was most convenient he should rise the third day, and neither sooner nor later: not sooner, that the truth and certainty of his death might appear; not later, that his body might not be corrupted in the grave, as was foretold, Ps. xvi. 10. and that, by a longer delay of his resurrection, the faith of his disciples might not be too much shaken.

At the end therefore of the sabbath, or when the sabbath was now past, and when it dawned towards the first day of the week, in the morning very early, while it was yet dark, Mary Magdalen, getting the other women together, she and they set out to go to the sepulchre, bringing spices that they had bought, that they might embalm the body of Jesus; but before they got to the sepulchre, it was sun-rising. These women seem to know nothing of the watch that was set over the sepulchre, and the sealing of the stone; for all their care is, how to get the stone rolled away. When they came thither, they found that done already; and the watch also was fled; for behold early in the morning there was a great earthquake, and the angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it, on the right hand of the entering into the sepulchre, in the shape of a young man, his countenance like lightning, and his raiment white as snow*. And when the women entered in, they found not the body of Jesus there, but saw another angel, who with the former (which possibly now removed into the sepul-

* Those bodies, or bodily shapes, in which these angels appeared, were either extraordinarily, and by the immediate power of God, created of nothing, or formed of some pre-existent matter, and so were assumed by the angels. These bodies were no part of their nature united to them as our bodies to us, but rather they were as our garments are to us. And if they were created, then they were reduced to nothing again: or if they were made of any pre-existent matter, then they were dissolved again into the same matter by the power of God; see Petter on Mark. It is a law among spirits (as the excellent Mr. Mede thinks), that when they have intercourse or converse with men, they should take some visible shape upon them. Good angels, he conceives, can take no other shape than the shape of a man, because their glorious excellency is to be resembled only in the most excellent of visible creatures. No other shape becomes those that are called the Sons of God, but his only created after God's own image; and not his neither, as now it is, but according as it was before the fall in the glorious beauty of his integrity. Age and deformity are the fruits of sin; and therefore the angel, Mark xvi. appears like "a young man, his countenance like lightning, and his garments white as snow," as it were resembling the beauty of glorified bodies. So that it is probable the devil, that apostate spirit, could not have appeared in a human shape, while man stood in innocency; but, being a degenerated spirit, he must appear in such a shape as might argue his imperfection and abasement, which was the shape of a beast. But now the case is altered: for since our fall we know he can assume the shape of a man; and no wonder that one fallen creature should resemble another. Yet he still appears, they say, in the shape of man's imperfections, either as an old or deformed man, and has ever the deformity of some member about him to denote his condition. But before man's fall it is probable he could not have assumed the shape of a man; and therefore, when he tempted our first parents, he appeared in the shape of a beast, the shape of a serpent. Thus far he.

chre, and at there) told them* of his being risen, and bade them not to fear or be affrighted, but behold the place where the Lord lay, and not seek the living among the dead. He further bids them to go quickly, and tell his disciples, and Peter in particular (because he had fallen so grievously in denying his master, and was so grieved for it, and therefore had more need to be speedily comforted with this good news, than any of the other disciples), that "he was risen from the dead, and that he would go before them into Galilee" (though not immediately as soon as he was risen, but after some space of time spent in Judæa), then he would go thither, where he had most conversed, and preached most frequently, and where he had most disciples (to whom his desire and purpose was to shew himself after his resurrection, for the confirmation of their faith), and there he intended to manifest himself unto them most publicly, see 1 Cor. xv. 6.

Then the women remembered the words of Jesus, and departing quickly out of the sepulchre with fear, and wonder, and great joy, ran to tell his disciples, yet they said nothing to any man by the way, for they were afraid of the Jews. But when they came to the disciples, and had told them what they had seen, their words seemed to them as idle tales; yea Mary herself seems as yet to doubt whether he were risen, or no; for she tells Peter and John, "They have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they have laid him." Hereupon Peter and John run to the sepulchre, and Mary Magdalen follows them; and John outran Peter, and came first to the sepulchre, and when he stooped down, he saw the linen cloaths lying there (which was a sign that his body was not taken away, for then the cloaths would in all probability have been taken away with it), but went not in. Then Peter came and went into the sepulchre, and saw and believed that Christ's body was gone, according to Mary's report; for as yet they understood not fully those scripture-prophecies which foretold that he must rise again from the dead. And they returned home, wondering how these things could so be, and what would be the issue of them.

1. Now Mary Magdalen stayed there still weeping, and at length looking in, she saw two angels in white, the one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain, who said unto her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She said unto them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." And when she had so said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing there, but knew not that it was he (her eyes being yet holden from knowing of him, see Luke xxiv. 16.), but supposing it had been the gardener, she accordingly said unto him, "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him," and I will take care to have him carried to his sepulchre again, or provide some other burying-place for him. Hereupon Christ says to her, Mary. At that word she knew him, and cries out, Rabboni, that is, "It is my Master, my Lord Christ." And then going, it seems, to embrace his feet, he prohibits her, saying, "Touch me not;" as if he had said, 'Stay not to touch, or embrace me now,' for I do not immediately ascend to my Father; and there will be time enough for thee hereafter by seeing, hearing, and touching, further to assure thyself, that it is I, who am now indeed risen from the dead, and to give me this proof of thy affection, which thou now desirest; but go thy way speedily to my brethren, and tell them, that "thou hast seen me," and that I shall shortly ascend (after I have informed them of all things necessary for them to know) "unto him who is my Father (by nature) and their Father (by adopting of them), unto my God, and their God;" and this was his first appearing after his resurrection. Mary goes immediately to his disciples, and those that had been with him, whom she finds weeping and mourning, and tells them, that "she had seen the Lord," and that he had said these things unto her. But they, when they heard he was alive, and had been seen of her, "believed it not."

2. The other women, who had been before with Mary at the sepulchre, had seen that the body of Jesus was not there, and had heard the angels declare that he was risen, hearing from

* Or else, whereas it is said, Luke xxiv. 5. that both the angels spake to the women, we must know, that that is attributed to both (by a fylleipsis) which is to be understood but of one.

Mary Magdalen now that she had seen the Lord himself, they, it seems, went back to the sepulchre again, hoping they should have the happiness to see him also; and being there told again by the angel of Christ's resurrection, and bade to acquaint his disciples therewith, behold in the way Jesus meets them, and saith unto them, "All-hail," and they came and "held him by the feet, and worshipped him." Then he bade them not be afraid, but go and "tell his brethren," that they should go into Galilee, and there they should meet him, Matt. xxviii. from ver. 5 to 11.

3. The watchmen, who were set to guard and keep the sepulchre (being frightened at the earthquake, and the apparition of the angel that rolled away the stone), fled into the city, and shewed to the chief priests all that had happened. They thereupon assemble together with the elders, and agree to give a good sum of money to the soldiers, that they should say, "His disciples came by night, and stole him away, whilst they slept;" promising withal, that if it came to Pilate's ears, they would persuade him it was so, and would save them harmless*. The soldiers accordingly took the money, and did as they were bidden for the present; but it is probable they afterwards confessed this fraud to their companions, Matt. xxviii. from 11 to 16.

4. The same day in the afternoon two of his disciples, who seem to be of the number of the seventy (whereof one was Cleophas) go to Emmaus, a village that was sixty furlongs† from Jerusalem. As they were in the way, Jesus joins himself to their company; but their eyes were so holden by the power of God, that they did not discern him, "in his own proper shape," but thought it had been another person whom they conversed with. And they telling him what things were done in those days concerning Jesus of Nazareth, he shews them out of the scriptures, "it behoved Jesus to suffer such things, and so to enter into his glory." When they came to the village, he made offer to go further, and it is likely would have so done, if their importunity had not detained him; but upon their earnest entreaty, he continued with them. And as he sat at meat with them, "he took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it unto them." Then their eyes were opened, and they discerned who he was, and immediately he vanished out of their sight.

5. Upon this, these two disciples arose presently, and went to Jerusalem, and found the Eleven, and those that used to associate with them, gathered together; and (though Thomas was not now there, yet the title of the whole chorus or number of apostles is given to them, because the greatest part of them was there), as soon as they were come among this company, these two were told by some of them, "That the Lord was risen indeed, and had appeared unto Simon;" and of which appearing to Peter alone Paul speaks, 1 Cor. xv. 5. Hereupon these two declared what had happened to themselves in the way, and how Christ was made known to them in the breaking of bread; yet some of the company did not believe it, though certified to them, upon the testimony and report of these two disciples. Whilst therefore they were discoursing of these matters, and some of them were still doubting, Jesus, insensibly as to them, the doors being shut, came and stood in the midst of them, and said, "Peace be unto you." At this they were much surprised and affrighted, supposing they had seen a spirit: but he upbraided them with their unbelief, and hardness of heart, because "they believed not those who had seen him, since he was risen," and who had reported the same unto them. Then he gave them a more clear evidence of his resurrection, by shewing them his pierced hands and side, and the scars and marks which he yet retained, that they might see it was the same person, and no other than their crucified Master, who now appeared to them. And he said unto them, "Why are ye troubled? See my hands and feet. A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me to have." And when they, through transport of joy, could hardly believe their own eyes, further to con-

* What could be a more monstrous suggestion than that Christ's few and fearful disciples should attempt to open the sepulchre guarded by soldiers; or that the soldiers should be all sleeping at once, and so fast asleep that the great stone of the sepulchre should be rolled back, and yet none be awakened thereby?

† A furlong is two hundred and twenty-five paces, so that the eight furlongs make an Italian mile, three of which are about an hour's walk, so that sixty furlongs make about two hours' walk and an half.

firm them in a certain belief of his being risen, he asked them, "If they had any meat there?" And they bringing him a piece of a broiled fish, and an honey-comb, he ate thereof before them. And they rejoiced exceedingly "when they saw the Lord." Then he told them that these were the words he spake to them, whilst he was with them, that "all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning him."

Then he opened their understandings (by the illumination of his holy Spirit), that they might understand the scriptures, telling them, that "thus it is written, and thus it behoved * Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, that repentance and remission of sin might be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." It being promised, Isa. ii. 3. that "the Gospel should go forth out of Sion and Jerusalem." And he tells them, they shall bear witness unto all nations of those things they had seen concerning him, Acts i. 8. He further assures them, that he would shortly send the promise of his Father upon them, that is, the Holy Ghost, which he would send them from the Father [John xiv. 16. and xv. 26.], and which was promised of the Father by the prophet Joel, ch. ii. 28, 29. and bids them tarry at Jerusalem, till they were endued with power, and the miraculous gift of the holy Spirit, which should descend from heaven upon the day of Pentecost.

Then he said again, "Peace be unto you," and confirms and renews their calling to the apostleship, or work of the ministry, as they might possibly be much discouraged with the remembrance of their faint-heartedness in the time of his late sufferings. He therefore anew commissions them, and sends them to the work of the ministry: "As my Father sent me," to the work of the ministry, and preaching the Gospel, "so send I you." And when he had so said, he breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," that is, the gifts of the Spirit for that office; some fruits whereof (before that full measure was poured out, Acts ii.) he now bestows on them; and he does it by breathing on them, being an extraordinary sign of his communicating this extraordinary benefit to them. And as by God's breathing, the first man was made a living soul, Gen. ii. 7. so our Saviour, by breathing on his apostles, quickened and put life into their spirits, and extraordinarily enabled them for the services he called them to. Lastly, he adds, "Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose sins ye retain, they are retained." In these words he asserts their authority in the discharge of their commission, and declares, that what they act this way ministerially according to their commission (both doctrinally, and by judicial procedure) is ratified in heaven, as being a declaration and intimation of the sentence of that court. This power is elsewhere called "the keys of the kingdom of heaven," comprehending both the key of knowledge or doctrine, and the key of order or discipline, Matt. xvi. 19. and "the power of binding and loosing," Matt. xviii. 18, 20. Here it is called by our Saviour, remitting and retaining. The authority, therefore, of ministers of the Gospel, respecting the sins of those who are members of the church, consists in this, that they are by their doctrine to declare against all sin as sin, be it ever so secret or inward; but to exercise their power in discipline against sin only as it is open, scandalous, and infectious. And as to such open sinners as are penitent, and feel the bonds of their sins, they are declaratively, and by authority from Christ, to absolve and loose them, and to take off any censure judicially passed on them, for their scandalous behaviour; but to such as are impenitent, they are, by their doctrine, in Christ's name, to declare their sins not to be remitted, but fast bound upon them; and, as need requires, they are by a judicial sentence to bind them straiter, that so they may feel those bonds, and seek to be loosed from them; and thus they are ministerially to remit and retain sins. And what is thus done according to the rules of the word is ratified in heaven, and both the penitent and the obstinate sinner will find God's mind towards them to be according as is declared in his name, and ac-

* *Necessitate consequentie*, because God's counsel had so appointed to accomplish man's redemption by the death and resurrection of his Son.

according to his appointment in his word. And thus Jesus appeared five times on the very day of his resurrection.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS on CHRIST'S Resurrection.

The devout Maries keep close, and silently spend their sabbath in a mixture of grief and hope. How did they wear out those sad hours in bemoaning themselves each to other! in mutual relations of the patient sufferings, of the happy expiring of their Saviour; of the wonderful events, both in the heavens and earth, that accompanied his crucifixion; of his frequent and clear predictions of his resurrection! and now they have gladly agreed (soon as the time will give them leave), in the dawning of the Sunday morning, to visit that dear sepulchre, neither will they go empty-handed. She who had bestowed that costly alabastrer box of ointment, upon her Saviour alive, hath prepared no less precious odours for him dead.

Love is restless and fearless. In the dark time of night these good women go to buy their spices, and, ere the day-break, are gone out of their houses towards the tomb of Christ, to bestow them. This sex is commonly fearful: it was much for them to walk alone in that unsafe season; yet, as if despising all fears and dangers, they thus spend the night after their sabbath. Might they have been allowed to buy their perfumes on the sabbath, or to have visited that holy tomb sooner, can we think they would have staid so long? can we suppose they would have cared more for the sabbath, than for the Lord of the sabbath, who now kept his sabbath in the grave? Sooner they might not come, later they would not, to present their last homage to their dead Saviour. Had these holy women known their Jesus to be alive, how had they hastened, who made such speed to do their last offices to his sacred corpse! For us, we know that our Redeemer liveth; we know where he is. Oh Saviour, how cold and heartless is our love to thee, if we do not haste to find thee in thy word and sacraments! if our souls do not fly up to thee, in all holy affections, into thy heaven!

Of all the women, Mary Magdalen is first named, and, in some evangelists, alone; she is noted above her fellows; none of them were so much obliged, none so zealously thankful. Seven devils were cast out of her, by the command of Christ; that heart which was freed from Satan by that powerful dispossession, was now possessed with a free and gracious bounty to her deliverer. Twice at the least hath she poured out her fragrant and costly odours upon him. Where there is a true sense of favour and beneficence, there cannot but be a fervent desire of retribution. O blessed Saviour, could we feel the danger of every sin, and the malignity of those spiritual possessions from which thou hast freed us, how should we pour out ourselves into thankfulness unto thee!

Every thing here had horror. The place was both solitary, and a sepulchre: nature abhors, as the visage, so the region of death and corruption: the time, night; only the moon gave them some faint glimmering (for this, being the seventeenth day of her age, afforded some light to the latter part of the night); the business, the visitation of a dead corpse. Their zealous love hath easily overcome all these. They had followed him in his sufferings, when the disciples left him; they attended him to his cross, weeping; they followed him to his grave, and saw how Joseph laid him; even there they leave him not, but, ere it be day-light, return to pay him the last tribute of their duty. How much stronger is love than death! O blessed Jesus, why should not we imitate thy love to us? Those whom thou lovest, thou lovest to the end, yea in it, yea after it. Even when we are dead, not our souls only, but our very dust is dearly respected of thee. What condition of thine should remove our affections from thy person in heaven, from thy members on earth!

Well did these worthy women know what Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had done to thee: they saw how curiously they had wrapped thee, how precious they had embalmed thee; yet, as not thinking the beneficence of others could be any just excuse of theirs, they bring their own odours to thy burial, to be perfumed by the touch of thy sacred body. What thank is it to us that others are obsequious to thee, while we are slack

or niggardly? We may rejoice in others' forwardness; but if we rest in it, how small joy shall it be to us, to see them go to heaven without us!

When, on the Friday evening, they attended Joseph to the intombing of Jesus, they marked the place, they marked the passage, they marked that inner grave-stone, which the owner had fitted to the mouth of that tomb; which all their care is now to remove; "Who shall roll away the stone?" That other more weighty load, wherewith the vault was barred, the seal, the guard, set upon both, came not, perhaps, into their knowledge; this was the private plot of Pilate and the priests, beyond the reach of their thoughts.

I do not hear them say, How shall we recover the charges of our odours? or, how shall we avoid the envy and censure of our angry elders, for honouring him whom the governors of our nation have thought worthy of our condemnation? The only thought they now take, is, "Who shall roll away the stone?" Neither do they stay at home, and ruminate on this doubt; but, when they are pretty forward on their way, resolve to try the issue. Good hearts cannot be so solicitous for any thing under heaven, as for removing those impediments which lie between them and their Saviour. Oh blessed Jesus, thou who art clearly revealed in heaven, art yet still both hid and sealed up from too many here on earth: neither is it some thin veil that is spread between thee and them, but an huge stone; even a true stone of offence lies rolled upon the mouth of their hearts; yea, if a second weight were superadded to thy grave here, no less than three spiritual bars are interposed betwixt them and thee above; idleness, ignorance, unbelief; who shall roll away these stones, but the same power that removed thine? O Lord, remove that our ignorance, that we may know thee; our idleness, that we may seek thee; our unbelief, that we may find and enjoy thee.

How well it succeeds, when we go faithfully and conscientiously about our work, and leave the issue to God! Lo, now God hath removed the cares of these holy women, together with the grave-stone. To the wicked, that falls out which they feared; to the godly, that which they wished and cared for, yea more. Holy cares ever prove well; the worldly dry the bones, and disappoint the hopes. Could these good visitants have known of a greater stone sealed, of a strong watch set, their doubts had been doubled: now God goes beyond their thoughts, and at once removes that which both they did and might have feared. The stone is removed; the seal broken, the watch fled. What a scorn doth the almighty God put upon the impotent designs of men! They thought the stone shall make the grave sure, the seal shall make the stone sure, the guard shall make both sure. Now when they think all safe, God sends an angel from heaven above, the earth quakes beneath, the stone rolls away, the soldiers stand like carcases, and, when they have got heart enough to run away, think themselves valiant;—the tomb is opened, Christ is risen, they confounded. Oh the vain projects of silly men! As if with one shovel-full of mire they would dam up the sea; or with a cloth hanged forth they would keep the sun from shining. Oh those spiders-webs, or houses of cards, which fond children have (as they think) skilfully framed, which the least breath breaks and ruins! Who are we, sorry worms, that we should look, in any business, to prevail against our Creator! What creature is so base that he cannot arm against us, to our confusion! The lice and frogs shall be too strong for Pharaoh, the worms for Herod. "There is no wisdom nor counsel against the Lord."

Oh the marvellous pomp and magnificence of our Saviour's resurrection! The earth quakes, the angel appears; that it may be plainly seen that this divine person now rising had the command both of earth and heaven. At the dissolution of thine human nature, O Saviour, was an earthquake; at the reuniting of it, is an earthquake; to tell the world, that the God of nature then suffered, and had now conquered; while thou reposedst still in the earth, the earth was still when thou camest to fetch thine own, "The earth trembled at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob." When thou our true Sampson awakedst, and foundest thyself tied with these Philistian cords, and rousedst up, and brakest those hard and strong twists with a sudden power, no marvel if the room shook under thee.

Good cause had the earth to quake, when the God that made it powerfully calls for
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his own flesh, from the usurpation of her bowels. Good cause had she to open her graves, and yield up her dead, in attendance to the Lord of life, whom she had presumed to detain in that cell of her darkness. What a seeming impotence was here, that thou, who art the true rock of thy church, shouldst lie obscurely shrouded in Joseph's rock! thou that art the true corner-stone of thy church, shouldst be shut up with a double stone, the one of thy grave, the other of thy vault! Thou, by whom we are sealed to the day of our redemption, shouldst be sealed up in a blind cavern of earth! But now, what a demonstration of power doth both the world and I see, in thy glorious resurrection! The rocks tear, the graves open, the stones roll away, the dead rise and appear, the soldiers flee and tremble. Saints and angels attend thy rising. O Saviour, thou liedst down in weakness, thou risest in power and glory; thou liedst down like a man, thou risest like a God.

What a lively image hast thou herein given me of the dreadful majesty of the general resurrection, and thy second appearance! Then, not the earth only, but the powers of heaven shall be shaken: not some few graves shall be open, and some saints appear, but all the bars of death shall be broken, and all that sleep in their graves shall awake, and stand up from the dead, before thee. Not some one angel shall descend, but thou the great Angel of the covenant, attended with thousand thousands of those mighty spirits: and if these stout soldiers were so filled with terror at the feeling of an earthquake, and the sight of an angel, that they had scarce breath left in them, for the time, to witness them alive; where shall thine enemies appear, O Lord, in the day of thy terrible appearance, when the earth shall reel and vanish, and the elements shall be on a flame about their ears, and the heavens shall be wrapped up as a scroll!

O God, thou mightest have removed this stone, by the force of thine earthquake, as well as rive other rocks, yet thou wouldst rather use the ministry of an angel; or, thou that gavest thyself life, and gavest being both to the stone and to the earth, couldst more easily have removed the stone, than moved the earth; but it was thy pleasure to make use of an angel's hand. And now, he that would ask why thou wouldst do it rather by an angel than by thyself, may as well ask why thou didst not rather give thy law by thine own immediate hand, than by the ministration of angels? why by an angel thou smitest the Israelites with plagues, the Assyrians with the sword? why an angel appeared to comfort thee after thy temptation and agony, when thou wert able to comfort thyself? why thou usest the influences of heaven to fructify the earth? why thou employest second causes in all events, when thou couldst do all things alone? It is with good reason thou shouldst serve thyself of thine own, neither is there any cause to be inquired either for their motion or rest, besides thy will.

Thou didst raise thyself, thy angels removed the stone; they that could have no hand in thy resurrection, yet shall have an hand in removing outward impediments; not because thou needest, but because thou wouldst; even as thou alone didst raise Lazarus, when thou didst bid others let him loose. Works of omnipotence thou reservest to thine own immediate performance, ordinary actions thou dost by subordinate means.

However, this act of the angels was not merely with respect to thee; but partly to those devout women, to ease them of their care, to manifest unto them thy resurrection: so officious are those glorious spirits not only to thee their Maker, but even to the meanest of thy servants, especially in the furtherance of all their spiritual designs. Let us bring our ointments, they will be sure to roll away the stone. Why do not we imitate them in our forwardness to promote each other's salvation? We pray to do thy will here, as they do in heaven; if we do but act our wishes, we do not mock thee in our devotions.

How glorious did this angel of thine appear! The terrified soldiers saw his face like lightning; both they and the women saw his garments shining, bright, and white as snow: such a presence became his errand. It was fit that as, in thy passion, the sun was darkened, and all creatures were clad with heaviness, so in thy resurrection the best of thy creatures should testify their joy and exultation in the brightness of their habit; that as we, on festival days, put on our best cloaths, so thine angels should celebrate this blessed festi-

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vity with a meet representation of glory. They could not but enjoy our joy, to see the work of man's redemption thus fully finished; and, if there be mirth in heaven at the conversion of one sinner, how much more when a world of sinners is perfectly ransomed from death, and restored to salvation! Certainly, if but one or two appeared, all rejoiced, all triumphed: neither could they but be herein sensible of their own happy advantage, who by thy mediation are confirmed in their glorious state; since thou, by the blood of thy cross, and power of thy resurrection, hast reconciled things not in earth only, but in heaven.

But, above all other, the love of thee their God and Saviour must needs heighten their joy, and make thy glory theirs. It is their perpetual work to praise thee; how much more now, when such an occasion was offered as never had been since the world began, never could be after: when thou, the God of spirits, hadst vanquished all the spiritual powers of darkness; when thou, the Lord of life, hadst conquered death for thee and all thine; so as they may now boldly insult over their last enemy, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Certainly, if heaven can be capable of an increase of joy and felicity, never had those blessed spirits so great a cause of triumph and gratulation as in this day of thy glorious resurrection. How much more, O dear Jesus, should we men, whose flesh thou didst assume, unite, revive! for whose sake, and in whose stead, thou didst vouchsafe to suffer and die! whose arrearages thou payedst in death, and acquittedst in thy resurrection! whose souls are discharged, whose bodies shall be raised by the power of thy rising! how much more should we think we have cause to be overjoyed with the happy commemoration of this great work of thy divine power and inconceivable mercy!

Lo now, how weak soever I am in myself, yet, in the confidence of this victorious resurrection of my Saviour, I dare boldly challenge and defy you, O all ye adverse powers; do the worst ye can to my soul, in despite of you it shall be safe.

Is it sin that threatens me? Behold, this resurrection of my Redeemer publishes my discharge. My surety was arrested, and cast into the prison of his grave; had not the utmost farthing of my debt been paid, he could not have come forth: he is come forth, the sum is fully satisfied. What danger can there be of a discharged debt?

Is it the wrath of God? Wherefore is that but for sin? If my sin be blotted out, that quarrel is at an end: and if my Saviour suffered it for me, how can I fear to suffer it in myself? That infinite Justice hates to be twice paid. He is risen, therefore he hath satisfied. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen."

Is it death itself? Lo, my Saviour, who overcame death by dying, hath triumphed over him in his resurrection. How can I now fear a conquered enemy? What harm is there in the serpent, but for his sting? The sting of death is sin; that is pulled out by my powerful Redeemer; it cannot now hurt me, it may refresh me to carry this cool snake in my bosom.

O then, my dear Saviour, I bless thee for thy death, but I bless thee more for thy resurrection. That was a work of wonderful humility, of infinite mercy; this a work of infinite power: in that was human weakness; in this, divine omnipotence: in that, thou didst die for our sins; in this, thou didst rise again for our justification.

And now, how am I conformable to thee, if, when thou art risen, I lie still in the grave of my corruptions? How am I a member of thy body, if, while thou hast that perfect dominion over death, death hath dominion over me? if, while thou art alive and glorious, I lie rotting in the dust of death? I know the loco-motive faculty is in the head; by the power of the resurrection of thee our head, all we thy members cannot but be raised; as the earth cannot hold my body from thee in the day of the second resurrection, so cannot sin withhold my soul from thee, in the first. How am I thine, if I be not risen? and if I be risen with thee, why do I not seek the things above, where thou sittest at the right hand of God?

The vault, or cave, which Joseph had hewn out of the rock, was large, capable of containing no less than ten persons: upon the mouth of it, eastward, was that great stone rolled: within it, at the right hand, in the north part of the cave, was hewn out a receptacle

cle for the body, three handfuls high from the pavement; and a stone was accordingly fitted for the cover of that grave. Into this cave the good women (finding the stone rolled away) descended to seek the body of Christ; and, in it, saw the angels. This was the gaol to which Peter and John ran, finding the spoils of death, the grave-cloaths wrapped up; and the napkin, that was about the head, folded up together, and laid in a place by itself; and as they came in haste, so they returned with wonder.

I marvel not at your speed, O ye blessed disciples, if, upon the report of the women, ye ran, yea, flew upon the wings of zeal to see what was become of your Master: ye had been accustomed to walk familiarly together, in the attendance of your Lord; now society is forgotten; and, as if for a wager, each tries the speed of his legs, and, with neglect of the other, vies who shall be first at the tomb.

Who would not but have tried masteries with you in this case, and have made light touches on the earth, to have held paces with you? Your desire was equal, but John is the younger, his limbs are more nimble, his breath more free; he first looks into the sepulchre, but Peter goes down first. Oh happy competition, who shall be most zealous in the inquiry after Christ! Ye saw enough to amaze you, not enough to settle your faith. How well might you have thought, Our Master is not purloined, but risen: had he been taken away by others' hands, this fine linen had not been left behind; had he not himself risen from this bed of earth, he had not thus wrapped up his night-cloaths, and laid them folded by themselves; what can we doubt when he foretold us he would rise! Oh blessed Jesus, how wilt thou pardon our errors, how should we pardon and pity the errors of each other, in lesser occasions, when as yet thy prime and dearest disciples, after so much divine instruction, "knew not the scriptures, that thou must rise again from the dead!" they went away more astonished than confident; more full of wonder as yet than of belief.

There is more strength of zeal (where it takes) in the weaker sex; those holy women, as they came first, so they staid last: especially devout Mary Magdalene stands still at the mouth of the cave, weeping; well might those tears have been spared, if her knowledge had been answerable to her affection; her faith to her fervor; withal (as our eye will be where we love) she stoops, and looks down into that dear sepulchre.

Holy desires ever speed well; there she sees two glorious angels, the one sitting at the head, the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain. Their shining brightness shewed them to be no mortal creatures, besides that Peter and John had but newly come out of the sepulchre, and both found, and left it empty, in her sight; which was now suddenly filled with those celestial guests; that white linen, wherewith Joseph had shrouded the sacred body of Jesus, was now eclipsed with a brighter whiteness.

Yet do I not find the good woman in the least appalled with that unexpected glory; so much was her heart taken up with the thought of her Saviour, that she seemed not sensible of any other object; those tears which she let drop into the sepulchre, send up back to her the voice of those angels, "Woman, why weepest thou?" God and his angels take notice of every tear of our devotion. The sudden wonder hath not dried her eyes, nor charmed her tongue. She freely confesseth the cause of her grief to be the missing of her Saviour; "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." Alas, good Mary, how dost thou lavish thy tears! of whom dost thou complain, but of thy best friend? who hath removed thy Lord, but himself? who but his own Deity hath taken away that human body out of that region of death? Neither is he now laid any more, he whose removal thou complaineest of, stands by thee. Thus many a tender and humbled soul afflicts itself with the want of that Saviour whom it hath, and feeleth not.

Sense can be no judge of the bewailed absence of Christ. Do but turn back thine eye. O thou devout soul; "and see Jesus standing by thee; thou knewest not that it was Jesus." His habit was not his own. Sometimes it pleases our Saviour to appear unto his not like himself; his holy disguises are our trials; sometimes he will seem a stranger, sometimes an enemy; sometimes he offers himself to us in the shape of a poor man, sometimes of a distressed captive; happy is he that can discern his Saviour in all forms; Mary took him for a gardener.

gardener. Devout Magdalene, thou art not much mistaken; as it was the trade of the first Adam to dress the garden of Eden, so was it the trade of the second to tend the garden of his church. He digs up the soil by seasonable afflictions, he sows in it the seeds of grace: he plants it with gracious motions; he waters it with his word, yea, with his own blood; he weeds it by wholesome censures. Oh blessed Saviour, what is it that thou neglectest to do for this selected inclosure of thy church! As in some respects thou art the true vine, and thy Father the husbandman; so also in some others we are the vine, and thou art the husbandman. Oh be thou such to me as thou appearedst unto Magdalene; break up the fallow ground of my nature, implant me with grace, prune me with meet corrections, bedew me with the former and latter rain, do what thou wilt to make me fruitful.

Still the good woman weeps, still complains, and passionately inquires of thee, O Saviour, for thyself. How apt are we, if thou dost ever so little vary from our apprehensions, to mistake thee, and to wrong ourselves by our wrong opinions! All this while hast thou concealed thyself from thine affectionate client; thou sawest her tears, and heardest her importunities and inquiries; at last, as it was with Joseph, that he could no longer conceal himself from the notice of his brethren, thy compassion causes thee to break forth into a clear expression of thyself, by expressing her name unto herself; "Mary." She was used, as to the name, so to the sound, to the accent. Thou spakest to her before, but in the tone of a stranger; now, of a friend, of a Master: like a good shepherd, thou callest thy sheep by their name, and they know thy voice. What was thy call of her, but a clear pattern of our vocation?

As her, so thou callest us; first, familiarly, effectually. She could not begin with thee otherwise than in the compellation of a stranger: it was thy mercy to begin with her. That correction of thy Spirit is sweet and useful, "Now after ye have known God, or rather are known of him," Gal. iv. 9. We do know thee, O our God, but our active knowledge is after our passive; first, we are known of thee, then we know thee, that knewest us. And as our knowledge, so is our calling, so is our election; thou beginnest to us in all, and most justly sayest, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." When thou wouldst speak to this devout client, as a stranger, thou spakest loftily, "Woman, whom seekest thou?" Now, when thou wouldst be known to her, thou callest her by her name, "Mary." General invitations, and common mercies are for us, as men; but where thou givest grace as to thine elect, thou comest close to the soul, and winnest us with dear and particular intimations.

That very name did as much as say, 'Know him of whom thou art known and beloved;' and it turns her about to thy view, and acknowledgment of thee; "She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master." Before, her face was towards the angels; this word fetches her about, and turns her face to thee, from whom her neglect had averted it. We do not rightly apprehend thee, O Saviour, if any creature in heaven or earth can keep our eyes and our hearts from thee. The angels were bright and glorious; thy appearance was homely, thy habit mean; yet when she heard thy voice, she turns her back upon the angels, and salutes thee with a "Rabboni," and falls down before thee, in a desire of an humble embracing of those sacred feet which she now rejoices to see needed not the use of her odours.

When there was such a familiarity in the mutual address, what means such strangeness in the charge? "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." Thou wert not wont, O Saviour, to be so nicely scrupulous of being touched; it is not long since these very same hands touched thee, in thine anointing; the bloody-fluxed woman touched thee; the thankful penitent in Simon's house touched thee: what speak I of these? the multitude touched thee, the executioners touched thee; and, even after thy resurrection, thou didst not hesitate to say to thy disciples, "Touch me, and see;" and to invite Thomas to put his fingers into thy side: neither is it long after this before thou sufferest the three Maries to touch and hold thy feet; how then sayest thou, "Touch me not?" Was it a mild chiding of her mistake? as if thou hadst said, Thou knowest not that I have now an immortal body, but so behest thyself towards me as if I were still in my former condition

dition; know now that the case is altered; but however, I have not indeed yet ascended to my Father, yet this body of mine, which thou seest to be real and sensible, is now impassible, and qualified with immortality, and therefore worthy of a more awful veneration than heretofore: or was it a gentle reproof of her dwelling too long in this dear hold of thee, and fixing her thoughts upon thy bodily presence; together with an implied direction of reserving the height of her affection for thy perfect glorification in heaven? or, lastly, was it a light touch of her too much haste and eagerness in touching thee, as if she must use this speed in preventing thine ascension, or else be endangered to be disappointed of her hopes; as if thou saidst, 'Be not so passionately forward and sudden in laying hold of me, as if I were instantly ascending; but know, that I shall stay some time with you upon earth, before my going up to my Father?' O Saviour, even our well-meant zeal, in seeking and enjoying thee, may be faulty; if we seek thee where we should not, on earth, how can we but do it unwarrantably? There may be a kind of carnality in spiritual action: "if we have heretofore known thee after the flesh, henceforth know we thee so no more;" that thou livedst here in this shape, that colour, this stature, that habit, I should be glad to know; nothing that concerns thee can be unuseful. Could I say, Here thou didst sit, here thou didst rest, here and thus thou wert crucified, here buried, here didst fix thy last foot; I should with much contentment see and recount these memorials of thy presence; but if I should so fasten my thoughts upon these, as not to look higher, to the spiritual part of thine achievements, to the power and issue of thy resurrection, I am never the better.

No sooner art thou risen, than thou speakest of ascending. As thou didst lie down to rise, so didst thou rise to ascend, that is the consummation of thy glory, and ours in thee. Thou that forbadeest her touch, enjoinedst her errand: "Go to my brethren, and say, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God."

The annunciation of thy resurrection and ascension is more than a private fruition: this is for the comfort of one; that for the benefit of many. To sit still and enjoy is more sweet for the present; but, to go and tell, is more gainful in the sequel. That great angel thought himself (as he well might) highly honoured in that he was appointed to carry the happy news unto the blessed Virgin (thy holy mother) of her conception of thee her Saviour; how honourable must it needs be to Mary Magdalene, that she must be the messenger of thy second birth, thy resurrection, and instant ascension! How beautiful do the feet of those deserve to be, who bring the glad tidings of peace and salvation! What matter is it, O Lord, if men despise where thou wilt honour?

To whom then dost thou send her? "Go, tell my brethren." Blessed Jesus, who are those? were they not thy followers? yea, were they not thy forsakers? yet, still thou stilest them thy brethren. O admirable humility! O infinite mercy! How dost thou raise their titles with thyself? At first they were thy servants; then, disciples; a little before thy death, they were thy friends; now, after thy resurrection, they were thy brethren; thou that wert exalted infinitely higher, from mortal to immortal, descendest so much lower, to call them brethren, who were before friends, disciples, servants. Why do we stand upon the terms of our poor inequality, when the Son of God stoops so low as to call us brethren? But, O mercy without measure! why wilt thou, how canst thou, O Saviour, call them brethren, whom in their last parting thou foundest fugitives? Did they not run from thee? Did not one of them rather leave his inmost coat behind him, than not be quit of thee? Did not another of them deny thee, yea abjure thee; and yet thou sayest, "Go, tell my brethren." It is not in the power of the sins of our infirmity to unbrother us; when we look at the acts themselves, they are heinous; when at the persons, they are so much more faulty, as more obliged; but, when we look at the mercy of thee, who hast called us, now, "Who shall separate us?" When we have sinned, thy endearing love may with good reason aggravate our sorrows; but when we have sorrowed, our faith hath no less reason to uphold us from despairing. Even yet, we are brethren; brethren in thee, O Saviour, who art ascending for us; in thee, who hast made thy Father ours, thy God our God. He is thy Father by eternal generation; our Father

by his gracious adoption; thy God, by unity of essence; our God, by his grace and election.

In this propriety our life and happiness consist. They are weak comforts that can be raised from the apprehension of thy general mercies; What were I the better, O Saviour, that God were thy Father, if he be not mine? Oh do thou give me a particular sense of my interest in thee, and thy goodness to me; bring thou thyself home to me, and let me find that I have a God and Saviour of my own.

It is fit I should mark thy order; first, my Father, then yours; even so, Lord, he is first thine, and, in thy right, only ours. It is in thee that we are adopted; it is in thee that we are elected; without thee, God is not only a stranger, but an enemy to us; thou only canst make us free, thou only canst make us sons; let me be found in thee, and I cannot fail of a Father in heaven.

With what joy did Mary receive this errand! With what joy did the disciples welcome it from her! Here was good news from a far country, even as far as the utmost regions of death.

Those disciples whose flight scattered them in their Master's apprehension, are now, at night, like a dispersed covey, met together, by their mutual call. Their assembly is secret; when the light was shut in; when the doors were shut up: still were they fearful, still were the Jews malicious; the assured tidings of their Master's resurrection and life, have filled their hearts with joy and wonder; while their thoughts and speech are taken up with so happy a subject; his miraculous and sudden presence bids their senses be witnesses of his reviving, and their happiness: "When the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews; came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you." O Saviour, how thou camest in thither, I wonder, I inquire not; I know not what a glorified body can do. I know there is nothing that thou canst not do: had not thine entrance been recorded for strange and supernatural, why was thy standing in the midst noted before thy passage into the room? why were the doors said to be shut while thou camest in? why were thy disciples amazed to see thee before they heard thee? Doubtless, they that once before took thee for a spirit, when thou didst walk upon the waters, could not but be astonished to see thee while the doors were barred (without any noise of thine entrance) to stand in the midst; well might they think thou couldst not thus be there, if thou wert not the God of spirits. There might seem more doubt of thy reality than of thy power; and therefore, after thy wonted greeting, thou shewest them thy hands, and thy late sufferings, stamped with the impressions of thy feet. Thy respiration shall prove the truth of thy life: thou breathest on them, as a man; thou givest them thy Spirit, as a God; and, as God and man, thou sendest them on the great errand of thy Gospel.

All the mists of their doubts are now dispelled; the sun breaks out clear; they were glad when they had seen the Lord. Had they known thee for no other than a mere man, this re-appearance could not but have affrighted them. Since, till now, by thine almighty power, this was never done, that the long-since dead rose out of their graves, and appeared unto many; but when they recounted the miraculous works that thou hadst done, and thought of Lazarus so lately raised; thine approved Deity gave them confidence, and thy presence joy.

We cannot but be losers by our absence from holy assemblies; where wert thou, O Thomas, when the rest of that sacred family were met together? Had thy fear put thee to so long a flight, that, as yet, thou wert not returned to thy fellows? or didst thou suffer other occasions to detain thee from this happiness? Now, for the time, thou missest that divine breath which so comfortably inspired the rest; now thou art suffered to fall into that weak distrust which thy presence had prevented; they told thee, "We have seen the Lord;" was not this enough? would no eyes serve thee but thy own? were thy ears of no use to thy faith? "Except I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Suspicious man! who is the worse for that? Whose is the loss, if thou believe not? Is there no certainty but in thine own senses? Why, were not so many and so holy eyes and tongues

tongues as credible as thine own hands and eyes! How little wert thou yet acquainted with the ways of faith! Faith comes by hearing; these are the tongues that must win the whole world to an assent; and dost thou, the first man, forbear to yield? why was that word so hard to pass? Had not thy divine Master foretold thee, with the rest, that he must be crucified, and the third day rise again? Is any thing related to be done, but that which was fore-promised? any thing beyond the sphere of divine omnipotence? Go then, and please thyself in thine overwise incredulity, while thy companions are happy in believing.

Thomas rests a whole week in this fullen unbelief; in all which time, doubtless his ears were beaten with the many constant assertions of the holy women (the first witnesses of the resurrection), as also of the two disciples, walking to Emmaus (whose hearts, burning within them, had set their tongues on fire, in a zealous relation of those happy occurrences), with the assured reports of the rising and re-appearance of many saints, in attendance on the Lord and giver of life; yet still he struggles with his own distrust, and stiffly suspends his belief to that truth whereof he cannot deny that he is enough convinced. As all bodies are not equally apt to be wrought upon by the same medicine, so are not all souls by the same means of faith; one is refractory, while others are pliable. O Saviour, how justly mightest thou have left this man to his own obstinacy! whom could he have thanked, if he had perished in his unbelief? but, O thou good Shepherd of Israel, that couldst be content to leave the ninety and nine to go fetch one stray sheep in the wilderness: how careful wert thou to bring back this straggler to his fellows! Right well were thy disciples re-assembled, such was the season, the place the same, so were the doors shut up, when (that unbelieving disciple being now present with the rest) thou so camest in, so stoodst in the midst, so shewedst thy hands and feet; and, singling out thy incredulous disciple, invitest his eyes to see, and his fingers to handle thine hands; and his hand to be thrust into thy side, that he might not be faithless, but faithful.

Blessed Jesus, how thou pitiest the errors and infirmities of thy servants! Even when we are froward in our misconceptions, and worthy of nothing but desertion, how thou followest us, and overtakest us with mercy; and, in thine abundant compassion, wilt reclaim and save us, when either we meant not, or would not! By how much more unworthy those eyes and hands were to see and touch that immortal and glorious body, by so much more wonderful was thy goodness in condescending to satisfy that curious infidelity! Neither do I hear thee so much as chide that weak obstinacy; it was not long since thou didst sharply take up the disciples that walked to Emmaus; "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"

Behold, thy mercy, no less than thy power, hath melted the congealed heart of thy unbelieving follower: "Then Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God!" I do not hear, that, when it came to the issue, Thomas employed his hands in this trial; his eyes were now sufficient assurance: the sense of his Master's omniscience, in this particular challenge of him, perhaps spoiled the labour of a further disquisition: and now how happily was that doubt permitted to take place, which brought forth so faithful a confession, "My Lord, and my God!"

I have thus enlarged on the stupendous miracle of our Lord's resurrection, as the whole christian doctrine is founded on that glorious event. And from this history it is abundantly evident that our blessed Saviour shewed himself to his disciples and friends only, not to the Jews in general. This circumstance gave Spinoza a pretence for raising an objection, which his disciples have considered as the strongest argument against our Lord's resurrection: "If, say they, he really arose from the dead, to have shewed himself to his enemies as well as to his friends, would have put the truth of his resurrection beyond all doubt, than which nothing could be more necessary to the cause of christianity; and therefore the supposition of his having confined his appearances after his resurrection to a few select friends only, renders the affair extremely suspicious and improbable."

This argument, howsoever plausible it may appear at first sight, is destitute of the least force; because it may be demonstrated, that if Jesus had shewed himself to his enemies,

and to all the people in general, these appearances, instead of putting the truth of his resurrection beyond all doubt, would have weakened the evidence of it, at least in after-ages; and, consequently, have been of infinite prejudice to mankind; for upon the supposition that our blessed Saviour had shewed himself openly, one of the two things must necessarily have happened: either his enemies, submitting to the evidence of their senses, would have believed his resurrection; or, resisting that evidence, they would reject it altogether. I shall begin with considering the latter of these.

It is highly probable those enemies of Christ, who resisted the evidence of their senses, or who, though really convinced, would not acknowledge their conviction, must have justified their disbelief, by affirming, that the person who appeared to them, as risen from the dead, was not Jesus whom the Roman governor had crucified, but an impostor, who personated him. On any other foundation their infidelity would have been ridiculous and absurd; but if the believing Jews, by our Lord's appearing personally to them, would have been laid under a necessity of denying the reality of his resurrection, even though persuaded of it in their own minds, the evidence of fact could have gained nothing by such public appearances: because the generality of the Jews were not capable of passing such a judgment upon the falsehood which Christ's enemies must have made use of to support their denial of his resurrection. Being unacquainted with Jesus, they could not certainly tell whether he was really the very person whom the Romans had crucified. His apostles, disciples, and acquaintance, who, by their long attendance on him, knew his stature, shape, air, voice, and manner, were the only proper persons by whose determination the point in dispute could be decided: consequently if our Lord had appeared to all the people, if any considerable number of his enemies had continued in their infidelity, the whole stress of the evidence of his resurrection must have rested on the evidence of the very persons who, according to the plan pitched upon by Providence, bear witness to it now, and upon whose testimony the world has believed it. So that, instead of gaining an additional evidence by the proposed method of shewing Jesus publicly to all the people, we should have had nothing to trust to but the testimony of his disciples, and that clogged with this incumbrance, that his resurrection was denied by many to whom he appeared, and who were not convinced thereby.

In the second place, it may be supposed, that in case our blessed Saviour had shewed himself publicly, the whole nation of the Jews must have believed; and that future generations would thus have had the fullest evidence of the truth of his resurrection. But this, however, will not appear to be the case, if we consider, that the greatest part of our Lord's enemies, having not given themselves the trouble of attending him often, cannot be supposed to have been so well acquainted with his person, as to know him with certainty: for which reason, though he had shewed himself to them, even their belief of his resurrection must in a great measure have depended on the testimony of his disciples and friends; and if so, it is not very probable that his appearing publicly would have had any great effect on the Jews, to persuade them to embrace a crucified Messiah; it is far more reasonable to believe, that they would have rejected the whole, and continued in their infidelity.

In order to give the argument all the force the Deists can desire, let us suppose, that, in consequence of our blessed Saviour's appearing to all the people of the Jews, the nation in general would have been convinced of the truth of his resurrection, and become his disciples: what advantage would the cause of Christianity have reaped from such effects of our Lord's public appearance? Would the evidence of his resurrection have become thereby the more unquestionable? Or would the modern infidels have been the better disposed to believe in this crucified Jesus? By no means. For we do not find that men of this class are at all the more ready to believe the miracles of Moses in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness, because the whole nation were witnesses of them. The truth is, had our blessed Redeemer persuaded all the people of the Jews, by appearing personally to them, the objections against his resurrection would have been ten times more numerous and forcible than they are at present; for would not the whole have been called a state trick, a Jewish fable, a mere political contrivance, to patch up their broken credit, after they

they had so longed talked of a Messiah, who was to come at that time? Besides, we should certainly have been told, that, the government being engaged in the plot, a fraud of this kind might easily have been carried on, especially as the people in general would eagerly fall in with it; because it was so exactly adapted to their prejudices, and because the few, who had sagacity enough to detect the fraud, could have no opportunity of examining into it; or, if they did examine and detect the fraud, would not have dared to make any discovery of it, in opposition to the whole weight of the state; so that they would let it pass quietly, without once calling it in question.

It is evident, the resurrection of our great Redeemer, universally believed among the Jews, and published to the world by the unanimous voice of the nation, would have been liable to an infinite number of objections, which are all effectually cut off by the scheme made choice of by the wisdom of Providence: for as the people in general, and the rulers in particular, continued in their infidelity, the persons concerned in this supposed fraud must have carried it on under the greatest disadvantages. The reason is, that instead of making many friends to assist them, which a fraud of this kind requires, all men were their enemies, and interested to discover the cheat. The Jewish rulers, in particular, gave all possible encouragement to make the strictest scrutiny into the fact, and into all its circumstances; and many, doubtless, zealously made the inquiry with the utmost exactness. The apostles who preached the resurrection exposed themselves to the fiercest resentment of the men in power; because the resurrection of our great Redeemer cast the greatest reflection upon those who had put him to death.

It should also be remembered, that if the generality of the nation had not continued in their unbelief, the apostles, who preached the resurrection, would not have suffered those persecutions which in every country were raised against them, chiefly by the Jews; and consequently one of the strongest arguments for the truth of their testimony would have been wanting: whereas by their having been persecuted to death for their preaching the resurrection of their great Master, they fully demonstrated how sincerely they believed the great fact which they preached in continual jeopardy of their lives.

Thus have I endeavoured to answer, in the plainest and most satisfactory manner, the principal objection made by the Deists against the truth of our blessed Saviour's resurrection.

Thomas's abrupt speech imports a vehement admiration of Christ's mercy to him, and his own stupidity and dullness to believe; and it contains a short, but absolute confession of faith. Thomas collects from his resurrection, that Christ was the true Messiah, Redeemer, and Lord of all, and that no man could rise from the dead so as he did, but he who is God as well as man (see Rom. i. 4), and with an explicit faith he now professes his own interest in him. Our Saviour tells him, his faith would have been more excellent and more eminently rewardable, if, without such demonstrative evidence, he had believed; and pronounces those happy who shall hereafter believe, through the preaching of the Gospel, though they see him not in the flesh, nor behold these wounds he now shewed.

Our Saviour, rising the first day of the week, and appearing that day to the company of apostles, and appearing again on the same day of the week after; and likewise on the fiftieth day after his resurrection (which was also the first day of the week), on which day he poured forth his holy Spirit upon them; and the apostles afterwards observing the first day of the week for their solemn assemblies, as may be gathered from Acts xx. 7. on which day the disciples were gathered together, and "Paul preached unto them, and administered the Lord's supper," and Paul commanding, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. that "on that day they should lay up their money for the poor;" and John calling that day, as interpreters conclude, Rev. i. 10. the Lord's day;—from these authorities therefore, and the primitive practice, we derive our christian sabbath.

Our Saviour afterwards shewed himself to his disciples (at least to several of them) at the sea of Tiberias, as they were fishing, they being come from Jerusalem to Galilee, to meet him there, as he had appointed them [Matt. xxviii. 7, 16.] They had fished all night, and

and caught nothing. In the morning Jesus stands upon the shore (but they did not know him), and, calling to them in a familiar manner, asked them, as one that came to buy, if they had taken any thing? They answering, No, he bids them cast their net on the right side of the ship, which done, "they inclosed one hundred fifty-three great fishes," yet did not the net break, as formerly it had done in the like case, Luke v. 6. Hereupon John tells Peter, Assuredly it is Jesus. Peter, hearing that, would stay no longer, but girding his fisher's coat to him (which he only had on, having put off his outward garment), and being more zealous than the rest, cast himself into the sea to swim to him. But the rest of them did not so, but being not far from land, where Jesus was, went to him by boat, dragging the net full of fishes along with them. As soon as they came to land, they discerned another miracle, "a fire of coals, and fish laid on, and bread," all created and produced, it seems, out of nothing, by the divine power of Christ. Then he took bread and fish, and did eat himself, and gave to them to eat, to demonstrate to them the reality of his resurrection, and to assure them of the truth of his manhood there present, that they might not think it an illusion. And this was the third of his more public appearances to all or many of his disciples together.

After dinner he puts Peter to a threefold profession of his love to him, answerable to his threefold denial; and, to testify his love, bids him feed his lambs and his sheep. Then he warns him of his future sufferings, intimating he should prove more stout than in his former trial; he sheweth, that it should be otherwise with him in his old age, than in his youth, when he girded up his loins (according to the custom of those eastern people, who, wearing long garments, girded them up when they went a journey), and walked at his own pleasure; but in his old age others should bind him, and carry him whither he had no mind to go. Which he further explains by shewing he spake of the violent death he was to suffer, which he sweetens with this consideration, that hereby he should glorify God. Then our Saviour, rising from the rest of the company, bids Peter follow him, to point out, not so much his duty of present going after him, as to signify to him that it was his duty to imitate him in his resolution for suffering. After Christ and Peter had left the rest of the company, John of his own accord follows them; Peter (turning back, and observing this circumstance) inquires of our Saviour (who had foretold him of his sufferings) what should become of John? Jesus checks him for this, as meddling with that which did not concern him; and intimates to him that 'John should live till he came to take vengeance on the unbelieving Jewish nation, and destroy their city by the Romans.' But our Saviour's words were so mistaken by those who heard of them, that they apprehended he meant that John should not die at all, and accordingly it passed among them. Which mistake may commend unto us the wisdom of God, in leaving us a written word, and tying us to it, when we see erroneous traditions to be so soon on foot in the world, and our Saviour's own speeches so much mistaken, and that by saints themselves, even in the purest times; much more may others be misreported, and their words wrested contrary to their sense and meaning. John, being about now to conclude his Gospel, asserts, that there were many other things, namely, miracles and special deeds done by Jesus, both before and after his passion (whereof some are related by the other evangelists), which he had not set down; but what he had written tended to bring men to faith and salvation, and to clear what Christ was, and to manifest that "Salvation is to be had only through faith in him." He had not therefore written all that Christ did, but had omitted some particular miracles and transactions of the same nature and kind with these he had recorded, which he intimates were so many, that, should they all be written, the world (which will hardly admit a few and necessary things conducing to its good) would be much more unwilling to receive a narration of so many particulars. But for what he had written, not only himself, but other disciples of Christ, and true believers, could set their seal to the truth and certainty thereof.

After this, the Eleven go into Galilee, to a mountain whither Christ had appointed them, probably that mount near Capernaum, where he had chosen his apostles, and made that famous sermon, called, "The Sermon in the Mount:" and it is likely he appointed

this place not only to appear to the Eleven (for that he had done before), but it seems he intended this as a more general meeting for confirming the faith of the whole multitude of his Galilean and other disciples. This seems to be that glorious appearance, when "he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once," of which Paul speaks, 1 Cor. xv. 6. which appointment he published both before and after his resurrection, Matt. xxvi. 32. and xxviii. 10. and possibly he appointed the place so far from Jerusalem, that any of his disciples, whosoever would, might freely, and without danger, come thither to see their Saviour alive again, after his crucifixion. Of all his appearances to his disciples, Matthew only mentions this, possibly as the most remarkable; and though he speaks only of the Eleven [ch. xxviii. 16], yet his words are not exclusive of more: nay, when he says, some doubted (or rather had doubted, till now they saw him in his own proper figure, lineament, and appearance), he intimates that there were others there, besides the Eleven; for those had seen Christ since his resurrection, before this time.

At this meeting (or some other time since his resurrection) he tells them that "all power was given to him both in heaven and in earth"—First in heaven, which comprehends power of sending the Holy Ghost, Acts ii. 33. power over angels, Phil. ii. 9, 10. Heb. i. 4. Col. i. 16. and power to give heaven to all that shall believe in him, Matt. xxv. 34. Secondly, In earth, which comprehends power to gather a church out of all nations, Ps. ii. 8. Mark xvi. 15, 16. and to rule, govern and defend the same against all its enemies, Acts x. 36, 38, 42. Ephes. i. 20, 21. Rev. xvii. 14. He acquaints them with this, to animate his apostles the more in their work, and that they should go on courageously to set up his kingdom, seeing they were sent by him who had all power in heaven and earth committed unto him, and that they might be confident of success against all opposition. Then,

1. He gives them a command and commission to go and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, beginning at Jerusalem, Isa. ii. 3. and xl. 9. Ps. cx. 2. and declares, that, "he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned." For whereas before he had confined them to preach only to Israel, now they must preach to every creature (namely, which is fit to be preached to) that is, to all nations. And such as were converted by their ministry from heathenism to christianity, they were to baptize. So that this is not the first institution of baptism, but an enlarging of their former commission: neither are these words any direction as to that other matter of receiving or admitting infants, or those that were not infants, to baptism; that, we may suppose, was sufficiently notified to them before, both by the common practice of their ancestors in the Jewish religion, and by the vulgar notion of baptism, whilst it was familiarly used among the Jews*, both to their own, and their proselytes' children, and possibly by Christ's special direction also, though not mentioned by any of the evangelists, who set not down all the words of the first institution of baptism, which long preceded this time, as appears plainly from those words, John iv. 1, 2. "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples." Certainly Christ instituted baptism, and gave his apostles commission before they took upon them to baptize any, which we find they did in great numbers;

* By three things the Israelites entered into covenant: by circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice, Maym. Isuri. Bia. c. xiii. And here we may observe, 1. The Judaical baptism belonged to the children of all natives, of Jews as well as of Proselytes. 2. The baptism of the native Jews was the pattern by which the baptism of the Proselytes was regulated, and wherein it was founded, Numb. xv. 13. "One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you," &c. so that the foundation of circumcision and baptizing Proselytes was from these words. 3. The original baptism among the Jews themselves seems to be from the time of giving the law on Mount Sinai, Exod. xix. 10. "Sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their cloaths," so that baptism among the Jews belonged to their natives, as well as proselytes, even to all that entered into covenant; and these evidently were the Jewish children as well as men. Our Saviour thought fit to make former rites serve his divine purposes and ends, rather than to introduce new ones formerly unheard of: therefore he translated this ceremony, in use among the Jews, into his own service, and ordained it a sacrament of the New Testament, see Dr. Hammond in his Treatise of Baptism of Infants. Schiecard also gives testimony to the same purpose, "That the Jewish custom was to baptize their native infants," and the children the Proselytes had, at their first Proselytism. *Imo & apud Gentiles is mos fuit, ut per ablutionem corporis initiarentur sacris decorem.* Vid. Grotium in Matt. xxviii. 19.

yet the Gospel does not express the words of the first institution, nor the certain time of it, in the course of Christ's ministry among them; but certainly it was some time before that passage, or story, related in the before-mentioned place, John iv.

Christ therefore, now enlarging their commission, bids them "go and disciple all nations." The Heathen nations had been before taught of the devil, and were led away by his oracles and delusions; now they must "all be taught of God," Isa. liv. 13. namely, in the preaching of the Gospel. They had indeed in some small numbers been taught by Israel, "to know the Lord," and some of them were profelyted into the Jewish Religion: but now there should be no need of such profelyting; for "all should come to the knowledge of God," Heb. viii. 11. The Gospel in a more universal manner was to carry the knowledge of the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, through all nations. Those of the Gentiles, who had come into the church of Israel, had been inducted and initiated into it by being baptized; and so baptism must still be continued among all nations, as a badge of homage and subjection to Christ, to whom "all power is given in heaven and earth," as hath been before shewed; and they must be baptized into the profession of the true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in opposition to all false Gods and false worship whatsoever. Therefore infants born of Christian parents are to bear this badge, because none in Christian families should continue without a mark of homage and subjection to Christ (this being a distinctive mark against heathenism, that enjoins worshipping false gods), as no male in Israel, after eight days old, was to be without the badge of circumcision, whereby they were made federally the Lord's, and distinguished from the Heathen and Pagan world.

2. He promises not only that "many shall be converted to the faith," but that the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost should be conferred on them that should believe, John xiv. 12. not on all, but on some, for the confirmation of the doctrine of the Gospel; which gift seems more peculiarly to have appertained to those primitive times, wherein the Gospel was to be propagated*. Mark mentions some of the kinds of miracles they should do, ch. xvi. 17. "These are the signs or miracles which should follow them that believe, 1. In my name" (that is, calling upon me, and craving help and assistance from me, and by my power and authority committed unto them, and manifested in and by them) "they shall cast out devils." So Paul, Acts xxi. 17, 18. cast an evil spirit out of a maid." See Acts v. 16. viii. 7. 2. "They shall speak with tongues†." So the apostles did on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 4. x. 46. xix. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 10. 3. "They shall take up serpents without any hurt; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." So Paul shook the viper off his hand, without being harmed by it, Acts xxviii. 5. See Luke x. 19. 4. "They shall lay hands on the sick" (as an outward sign and token of a miraculous cure) "and they shall recover." So Publius was healed by Paul, Acts xxviii. 8. See also James v. 14. and 1 Cor. xii. 28.

3. And lastly, He promises "to be with them" and their successors in the ministry, by his power and authority, by his blessing, and the assistance of his holy Spirit "to the end of the world."

After this our Saviour was seen of James, as we read, 1 Cor. xv. 7. Some days after, when the apostles, by his command, had returned out of Galilee to Jerusalem, he there appears to them on the fortieth day after his resurrection, and having taught them "many things concerning the kingdom of God," he commands them to stay at Jerusalem till the Holy Ghost should descend upon them, telling them they should be witnesses both of his

* The apostles, and other believers who had the gift of miracles in those times, could not exercise that gift at all times, whenever they would, but only at such times, and upon such occasions, when it made for God's glory, and they were thereunto moved by special instinct. This gift was not *gratia habitualis*, but *impressio transiens*, as the Schoolmen teach. Thom. ii. 2. quest. 178. Phil. ii. 27. Epaphroditus was sick unto death, yet Paul did not cure him miraculously, as it is likely he would, if he could at all times have exercised that gift. It is gathered by learned men, that this gift lasted in the church (more or less) after the death of the apostles, two hundred years. See Paræus on Rom. xv. 19. It did not probably cease all at once, but by degrees.

† Some had the gift of speaking divers tongues, and some the gift of understanding and interpreting strange tongues to others, though they could not speak them themselves.

passion and resurrection, not only in Jerusalem and Samaria, but even to the ends of the earth. When he had given them this command, and had intimated to them that they should shortly be "baptized with the Spirit," they, dreaming still of a temporal kingdom (to which possibly they thought this extraordinary effusion of the Spirit would be an introduction), asked him, "whether he would restore the kingdom to Israel at that time, or no?" having an eye it seems, to that place in Dan. vii. 27. "And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." To whom he replies, that they ought to be contented with the knowledge of such things as the Father hath vouchsafed to reveal; but for other things, which he is pleased to keep secret, they should not pry into them, the knowledge of them being neither necessary nor profitable for them.

Then he led them forth to that part of Mount Olivet, which is near Bethany, and there "lifting up his hands, he blessed them." And as he blessed them, he was parted from them, and "carried up into heaven", a cloud receiving him out of their sight." As they were looking after him steadfastly towards heaven, two angels, clad in white raiment, appeared to them, and thus accosted them: "Ye men of Galilee! why tarry you here? That same Jesus whom you have now beheld ascending to the seats of eternal bliss, you shall hereafter see descending in like manner upon earth." Which when the apostles heard, having adored Jesus, they returned to Jerusalem with exceeding joy, for having been spectators of his ascension to the Father, as he had before promised them they should.

Useful and Practical REFLECTIONS and REMARKS on CHRIST'S Ascension.

It stood not with thy purpose, O Saviour, to ascend immediately from thy grave into heaven; thou didst mean to take the earth in thy way; not for a sudden passage, but for a leisurely conversation: upon thine Easter day thou spakest of thine ascension; but thou wouldst have forty days interpose. Hadst thou merely respected thine own glory, thou hadst instantly changed thy grave for thy paradise; for so much the sooner hadst thou been possessed of thy Father's joy. We would not continue in a dungeon, when we might be in a palace; but thou, who, for our sakes, vouchsafedst to descend from heaven to earth, wouldst now, in the close, have a gracious regard to us, in thy return.

Thy death had troubled the hearts of many disciples, who thought that condition too mean to be compatible with the glory of the Messiah; and thoughts of diffidence were apt to seize upon the holiest breasts; so long therefore wouldst thou hold footing upon earth, till the world were fully convinced of the infallible evidences of thy resurrection; of all which time, thou only canst give an account. It was not for flesh and blood to trace the ways of immortality; neither was our frail, corruptible, sinful nature, a meet companion for thy now-glorified humanity; the glorious angels of heaven were now the fittest attendants; but yet, how often did it please thee graciously to impart thyself, at this interval, unto men; and not only to appear to thy disciples, but to renew unto them the familiar forms of thy customary conversation, in conferring, walking, eating with them! and now, when thou drewest near to thy last parting, thou, who hast many times shewed thyself before to thy several disciples, thoughtest meet to assemble them all together, for an universal valediction.

Who can be too rigorous in censuring the ignorances of well-meaning Christians, when he sees the domestic followers of Christ, even after his resurrection, mistake the main end of his coming in the flesh? "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" They saw their Master, now, out of the reach of all Jewish envy; they saw his power unlimited, and irresistible; they saw him stay so long upon the earth, that they

* As God, he ascended or went thither by his own power; as man, he was carried up into heaven. It was his human nature that properly ascended; his Godhead, being every where present, cannot properly be said to have ascended by any change of place.

might imagine he meant to fix his abode there; and what should he do there, but reign? and wherefore should they be now assembled, but for the choice and distribution of offices, and for the right ordering of the affairs of that state which was now to be claimed and established! Oh the weak thoughts of well-instructed disciples! What should an heavenly body do in an earthly throne? How should a spiritual life be employed in secular cares? How poor a business is the temporal kingdom of Israel, for the King of heaven? And even yet, O blessed Saviour, I do not hear thee sharply rebuke this erroneous conceit of thy mistaken followers; thy mild correction insists rather upon the time, than the misconceived substance of that restoration. It was thy gracious purpose that thy Spirit should, by degrees, rectify their judgments, and illuminate them with thy divine truths; in the mean time, it was sufficient to raise up their hearts to an expectation of that Holy Ghost which should shortly lead them into all needful and requisite truths. And now, with a gracious promise of that Spirit of thine; with a careful charge renewed unto thy disciples, for the promulgation of thy Gospel; with an heavenly benediction of all thine acclaiming attendants, thou takest leave of earth; "When he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight."

Oh happy parting, fit for a Saviour of mankind, answerable to that divine conversation, to that succeeding glory! Oh blessed Jesus, let me so far imitate thee, as to depart hence with a blessing in my mouth; let my soul, when it is stepping over the threshold of heaven, leave behind it a legacy of peace and happiness.

It was from the mount of Olives that thou tookest thy rise into heaven; thou mightest have ascended from the valley, all the globe of earth was alike to thee; but since thou wert to mount upward, thou wouldst take so much advantage, as that step of ground would afford thee; thou wouldst not use the help of a miracle in that, wherein nature offered her ordinary service: what difficulty had it been for thee to have soared up from the very centre of earth? but since thou hadst made hills so much nearer to heaven, thou wouldst not neglect the benefit of thine own creation. Where we have common helps, we should not depend on supernatural provisions; we may not strain the divine Providence, to supply our negligence, or the humouring of our presumption. Thou that couldst always have walked on the sea, wouldst walk so but once, when thou wantedst shipping; thou, to whom the highest mountains were but vallies, wouldst walk up to an hill to ascend thence into heaven. O God, teach me to bless thee for means, when I have them; and to trust thee for means, when I have them not; yea, to trust to thee without means, when I have no hope of them!

What hill was this thou choosedst, but the mount of Olives? Thy pulpit, shall I call it, or thine oratory? The place from whence thou hadst wont to shower down thine heavenly doctrine upon the hearers; or the place whence thou didst use to send up thy prayers unto thy heavenly Father; the place that shared with the temple, for both. In the day time thou wert preaching in the temple: in the night, praying in the mount of Olives. On this very hill was the bloody sweat of thine agony; now, it is the mount of thy triumph; from this mount of Olives flowed that oil of gladness, wherewith thy church is everlastingly refreshed. That God, who uses to punish us in the same kind wherein we have offended, retributes also to us in the same kind and circumstance wherein we have been afflicted. To us also, O Saviour, even to us thy unworthy members, dost thou seasonably vouchsafe to give a proportionable joy to our heaviness, laughter to our mourning, glory to contempt and shame: our agonies shall be answered with exaltation.

Whither then, O blessed Jesus, whither didst thou ascend? Whither but home into thine heaven? From the mountain wert thou taken up; and what but heaven is above the hills? Lo, these are those mountains of spices which thy spouse the church long since desired thee to climb: thou hast now climbed up that infinite steepness; and hast left all sublimity below thee. Already hadst thou approved thyself the Lord and commander of earth, of sea, of hell: the earth confessed thee her Lord, when at thy voice she rendered thee thy Lazarus; when she shook at thy passion, and gave up her dead saints; the sea acknowledged thee, in that it became a pavement to thy feet, and (at thy command) to the feet of thy disciple; in that it became thy treasury for thy tribute money; hell found and acknowledged

ledged thee, in that thou conqueredst all the powers of darkness; even him that had the power of death, the devil: it now only remained, that, as the Lord of the air, thou shouldst pass through all the regions of that yielding element; and, as Lord of heaven, thou shouldst pass through all the glorious floorings thereof; that so every knee might bow to thee both in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth.

Thou hadst an everlasting right to that heaven that should be; an undoubted possession of it, ever since it was: yea, even while thou didst cry and move in the cradle; while thou didst hang upon the cross, while thou wert sealed up in thy grave; but thy human nature had not taken actual possession of it till now. Like as it was in thy true type, David; he had right to the kingdom of Israel immediately upon his anointing; but yet, many a hard conflict did he pass, ere he had the full possession of it in his ascent to Hebron. I see now, O blessed Jesus, where thou art; even far above all heavens, at the right hand of thy Father's glory. This is the far country into which the nobleman went to receive for himself a kingdom; far off to us, to thee near, yea most internal: Oh do thou raise up my heart thither to thee; place thou my affections upon thee above; and teach me therefore to love heaven, because thou art there.

How then, O blessed Saviour, how didst thou ascend? "While they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight." So wast thou taken up, as that the act was thine own, the power of the act none but thine. Thou that descendedst, wast the same that ascendedst; as in thy descent there was no use of any power or will but thine own, no more was there in thine ascent. Still and ever wast thou the Master of thine own acts; thou laidst down thy own life, no man took it from thee; thou raisedst up thyself from death, no hand did, or could help thee; thou carriedst up thine own glorified flesh, and placedst it in heaven: the angels attended thee, they did not aid thee; for whence had they their strength, but from thee? Elias ascended to heaven, but he was fetched up in a chariot of fire; that it might appear hence, that man had need of the help of others; who else could not of himself so much as lift up himself to the aerial heaven, much less to the imperial: but thou, our Redeemer, neededst no chariot, no carriage of angels; thou art the author of life and motion; they move in and from thee; as thou therefore didst move thyself upward, so, by the same divine power, thou wilt raise us up to the participation of thy glory: "These vile bodies shall be made like to thy glorious body, according to the working whereby thou art able to subdue all things unto thyself."

Elias had but one witness of his rapture into heaven: St. Paul had none; no not himself; for "whether in the body or out of the body, he knew not." Thou, O blessed Jesus, wouldst neither have all eyes witnesses of thine ascension, nor yet too few. As, after thy resurrection, thou didst not set thyself upon the pinnacle of the temple, nor yet publicly shew thyself within it; as making thy presence too cheap; but madest choice of the eyes of those whom thou wouldst bless with the sight of thee. Thou wast seen indeed of five hundred at once, but they were brethren: so in thine ascension, thou didst not carry all Jerusalem promiscuously forth with thee, to see thy glorious departure, but only that select company of thy disciples, which had attended thee in thy life. Those who, immediately upon thine ascending, returned to Jerusalem, were a hundred and twenty persons; a competent number of witnesses, to verify that thy miraculous and triumphant passage into thy glory. Lo, those only were thought worthy to behold thy majestical ascent, who had been partners with thee in thy humiliation. Still thou wilt have it thus with us, O Saviour, and we embrace the condition; if we will converse with thee in thy lowly estate here upon earth, wading with thee through contempt and manifold afflictions, we shall be made happy with the sight and communion of thy glory above.

O my soul, be thou now (if ever) ravished with the contemplation of this comfortable and blessed farewell of thy Saviour. What a sight was this, how full of joyful assurance, of spiritual consolation! Methinks I see it still with their eyes, how thou my glorious Saviour didst leisurely and insensibly rise up from thine Olivet; taking leave with gracious eyes, with heavenly benedictions, of thine acclaiming disciples, now left below thee. Methinks I see how they followed thee with eager and longing eyes, with arms lifted up,

as if they had wished them winged to have soared up after thee. And if Elijah gave assurance to his servant Elisha, that if he should behold him in the instant of his being caught up, his master's spirit should be doubled upon him:—what an accession of the spirit of joy and confidence must needs be to thy happy disciples, in seeing thee thus gradually rising up to thy heaven! Oh, how unwillingly did their intentive eyes let go so blessed an object! How unwelcome was that cloud that interposed itself betwixt thee and them! and, closing up itself, left only a glorious splendor behind it, as the bright track of thine ascension. Of old, here below, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud; now, afar off in the sky, the cloud intercepted this heavenly glory; if distance did not rather do it, than that bright meteor. Their eyes attended thee on thy way so far, as their beams would reach; when they could go no farther, the cloud received thee. Lo yet, even that very screen, whereby thou wast taken off from all earthly view, was no other than glorious; how much rather do all the beholders fix their sight upon that cloud, than upon the best piece of the firmament! Never was the sun itself gazed on with so much intentness: with what long looks, with what astonished acclamations, did these transported beholders follow thee their ascending Saviour! as if they would have looked through that cloud, and that heaven, that hid thee from them.

But O what tongue of the highest archangel of heaven can express the welcome of thee, the King of glory, into those blessed regions of immortality! Surely the empyrean heaven never resounded with so much joy; God ascended with jubilation and a shout—the Lord, with the sound of the trumpet. It is not for us weak and finite creatures to wish to conceive those incomprehensibly spiritual, divine gratulations that the glorious Trinity gave to the victorious and now-glorified human nature. Certainly, if, when he brought his only begotten Son into the world, he said, “Let all the angels worship him;” much more now, when he ascends on high, and hath led captivity captive, hath he given him a name above all names, that at the name of JESUS all knees should bow. And if the holy angels did so carol at his birth, in the very entrance into that state of humiliation and infirmity, with what triumph did they receive him now returning from the perfect achievement of man's redemption! And if, when his type had vanquished Goliath, and carried the head into Jerusalem, the damsels came forth to meet him, with dances and timbrels; how shall we think those angelical spirits triumphed in meeting the conqueror of hell and death! How did they sing, “Lift up your heads, ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.”

Surely, as he shall come, so he went; and behold, he shall come with thousands of his holy ones; “thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand thousands stood before him;” from all whom methinks I hear that blessed applause: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and praise! Praise, and honour, and glory, and power, be to him that sitteth upon the throne; and to the Lamb for evermore.” And why dost not thou, O my soul, help to bear thy part with that happy choir of heaven? Why art not thou rapt out of my bosom with an ecstasy of joy, to see this human nature of ours exalted above all the powers of heaven, adored of angels, archangels, cherubin, seraphim, and all those mighty and glorious spirits; and sitting there with infinite glory and majesty?

Yet little would it avail thee that our nature is thus honoured, if the benefit of this ascension did not reflect upon thee. How many are miserable enough in themselves, notwithstanding the glory of their human nature in Christ! None but those who are found in him, are the happier by him; who but the members, are the better for the glory of the head? O Saviour, how should our weakness have ever hoped to climb into heaven, if thou hadst not gone before, and made way for us? It is for us that thou the Fore-runner art entered in. Now thy church hath her wish: “Draw me, and I shall run after thee.” Even so, O blessed Jesus, how ambitiously should we follow thee with the paces of love and faith, and aspire towards thy glory! Thou who art the way, hast made the way to thyself and us; “Thou didst humble thyself, and becamest obedient to the death, even the death of the cross; therefore hath God highly exalted thee;” and upon the same terms will not fail to advance us. We see thy track before us, of humility and obedience; Oh teach

teach me to follow thee in the roughest ways of obedience, in the bloody paths of death, that I may at last overtake thee in those high steps of immortality and bliss!

Amongst those millions of angels, that attended this triumphant ascension of thine, some, O Saviour, are appointed to this lower station, to comfort thine astonished disciples, in the certain assurance of thy no less glorious return, "Two men stood by them in white apparel." They stood by them, they were not of them; they seemed men, they were angels: men for their familiarity; two, for more certainty of testimony; in white, for the joy of thine ascension.

The angels formerly celebrated thy nativity with songs; but we do not find they then appeared in white: thou wert then to undergo much sorrow, many conflicts; it was the vale of tears into which thou wert come down. As soon as thou wert risen, the women saw an angel in the form of a young man, cloathed in white; and now, as soon as thou art ascended, two men cloathed in white stand by thy disciples. Thy task was now done, thy victory atchieved, and nothing remained but a crown: which was now set upon thy head; justly therefore were those blessed angels cloathed with robes of light and joy. And why should our garments be of any other colour? why should oil be wanting to our heads, when the eyes of our faith see thee thus ascended? It is for us, O Saviour, that thou art gone to prepare a place in those celestial mansions; it is for us thou fittest at the right hand of Majesty: it is a part of thy divine prayer to thy Father, that "those, whom he hath given thee, may be with thee." To every bleeding soul, thou sayest still, as thou didst to Peter, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me hereafter." In assured hope of this glory, why do I not rejoice, and beforehand walk in white with thine angels, that at last I may walk with thee in white?

Little would the presence of these angels have availed, if they had not been heard, as well as seen; they stand not silent, therefore; but, directing their speech to the amazed beholders, say, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into heaven?" What a question was this! Could any of those two hundred and forty eyes have power to turn themselves off, to view any other object than that cloud, and that point of heaven where they left their ascended Saviour? Surely every one of them was so fixed, that, had not the speech of these angels called them off, there they had set up their rest, till the darkness of night had interposed. Pardon me, O ye blessed angels; had I been there with them, I should also have been unwilling to have mine eyes forced off from the dear prospect, and diverted unto you; never could they have gazed so happily as now. If but some great man be advanced to honour over our heads, how apt we are to stand at a gaze, and to eye him as some strange meteor! Let the sun but shine a little upon these dials, how are they looked at by all passengers! yet alas! what can earthly advancement make us other than we are, dust and ashes; which the higher it is blown, the more it is scattered? Oh, how worthy is the King of glory to command our eyes, now in the highest pitch of his heavenly exaltation! Lord, I can never look enough at the place where thou art, but what eye could be satisfied with seeing the way that thou wentest?

It was not the purpose of these angels to check the long and earnest looks of these faithful disciples after their ascended Master; it was only a change of eyes that they intended; of carnal for spiritual; of the eye of sense for the eye of faith: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven." Look not after him, O ye weak disciples, as so departed that ye shall see him no more; if he be gone, yet he is not lost; those heavens that received him, shall restore him; neither can those blessed mansions decrease his glory; ye have seen him ascend upon the chariot of a bright cloud; and in the clouds of heaven ye shall see him descend again to his last judgment. He is gone; can it trouble you to know you have an advocate in heaven? strive not now so much to exercise your bodily eyes in looking after him, as the eyes of your souls in looking to and for him.

Ye cannot, O ye blessed spirits, wish otherwise than well to mankind. How happy a diversion of eyes and thoughts is this that you advise! If it be our sorrow to part with our Saviour, yet, to part with him into heaven, it is our comfort and felicity; if his absence could be grievous, his return shall be happy and glorious.

Even

Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly! In the mean while, it is not heaven that can keep thee from me, it is not earth that can keep me from thee: raise thou up my soul to a life of faith with thee; let me ever enjoy thy conversation, while I expect thy return!

After Christ's ascension, he appeared in heaven to Stephen, Acts vii. 55. and from heaven to Paul, going to Damascus, as we read, Acts ix. 3, 27. and xxii. 14. Afterwards Paul saw him in prison, in a vision, Acts xxiii. 11. See also 1 Cor. xv. 8. and possibly when he was wrapt up into the third heaven, and there "heard things unutterable," 2 Cor. xii. 3, 4.

To conclude at present, in a few words; such was the life of Jesus of Nazareth, such his doctrine, and the miracles he wrought before his disciples and others, and such the fulfilling of his promise, that he would send them his Spirit. And these things, by his apostles and others of his disciples, have been transmitted in writing to posterity, besides many other passages which are not recorded: but these have been written, that the sincere lovers of truth may be convinced that Jesus is the Messiah, or the Son of God; and that by firmly believing his gospel, and constantly conforming their lives to the precepts of it, they may attain everlasting happiness. And should any undertake to give a full and exact account of every particular of his life, he would find very many and large volumes insufficient for his purpose.

PRACTICAL REMARKS ON THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

IF we trace the life of the blessed Jesus, from the time of his incarnation to that of his exaltation, we shall find that every circumstance of it tended to this one grand and important end, namely, the doing the will of his heavenly Father, respecting the salvation of mankind.

At an early period he began to preach that great doctrine of repentance (see Matt. iv. 17); and delivered his admirable sermon on the mount, containing a complete system of practical religion. He afterwards gave proofs of his divine mission by working divers miracles, and displaying in many instances his power and goodness. He then selected his disciples, instructed them in his holy doctrines, vested them with supernatural power, and commissioned them to preach the Gospel of his kingdom. This done, he persisted, to the last, in the good work with indefatigable assiduity, recommending unfeigned piety towards God, and universal benevolence to mankind, by his preaching, his parables, and, indeed, by the whole tenor of his life and conduct. Nor was there a godly principle or action which he did not countenance and exemplify; or a vice he did not censure or condemn. In a word, the holy Jesus went about doing good, according to the scriptural phrase; that is, he not only did most essential benefit to the souls and bodies of such as presented themselves to his view, and whom he stirred up to supplicate his divine aid; but he sought out divers poor objects, on whom he might exercise his pity and compassion.

His last and most important work still remained to be done. He was to suffer an ignominious death, even the death of the cross, to atone for the sins of offending men, and reconcile them to an offended God. In this he was to give an instance of obedience to the divine will, and love to sinful men, beyond the power of any being but himself.

This awful event he accomplished; and we find him struggling with the feelings of human nature, and exclaiming, under the most excruciating anguish of spirit, "Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt," Matt. xxvi. 39.

At length, after being betrayed by a faithless disciple, and undergoing the most unworthy treatment from a clan equally cruel and perverse; he was led to Calvary, the place of execution, there crucified; and, having commended his spirit into the hands of his Father, gave up the ghost. His sacred body was committed to the tomb: but, through his own divine power, he soon burst the cearments of death, re-appeared to his disciples and others, and, having given them the most demonstrative proofs of his identity, "he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven," Luke xxiv. 51.

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OUR SAVIOUR
JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD:
COLLECTED FROM
The FOUR EVANGELISTS, and digested according to the Order of Time.

The CHILDHOOD *of* CHRIST.

THE Word, which in the beginning was God and with God, in the fullness of time was made flesh, and dwelt among us, John i. 1, &c.

In the reign of Herod, king of Judæa, the divine herald, Gabriel the angel, appeared to Zacharias the priest, and foretold that he should have a son by his barren old wife Elizabeth; which son was to be the forerunner of the Word made flesh, Luke i. 5.

The sixth month after this, the same divine messenger Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary, the betrothed wife of Joseph, of the lineage of David, whom he acquaints with the special favour of Heaven, in designing her to be the mother of the Saviour of the world, and that she should conceive by virtue of the Holy Ghost, Luke i. 26.

Mary, being with child of Christ, visiting her cousin Elizabeth, who was big with the Baptist, magnifies God, and returns home joyful to her betrothed husband Joseph, Luke i. 39.

The Baptist, being born, receives the name of John, contrary to the expectation of his friends and relations, Luke i. 57.

His father Zacharias, having recovered the use of his tongue, blesteth God, Luke i. 67.

Joseph the husband of Mary being admonished by an angel in a dream, that his wife was with child by virtue of the Holy Ghost, takes her home, Matt. i. 19, &c.

Christ is born, in Bethlehem, of the Virgin Mary, Luke ii. 1.

His genealogy from Abraham to David is described, Matt. i. 1. Luke iii. 23.

His birth is published by the angels, Luke ii. 8.

He is circumcised the eighth day, and receives the name of Jesus, Luke ii. 21.

He is adored by the wise men that came from the east to see him, at the intimation of his star appearing, Matt. ii. 1.

When the days of purification according to the law were accomplished, they present him to the Lord in the temple at Jerusalem, Luke iii. 22.

No. 19.

4 Z

Herod

Herod intending to kill him in the massacre of the infants, by the advice and direction of an angel, he is conveyed into Egypt, Matt. ii. 13.

Returning from Egypt he dwelt with his parents in Nazareth, a city of Galilee, until the day of his manifesting himself to Israël, Matt. ii. 19.

Being twelve years old, he goeth up with his parents to Jerusalem to celebrate the passover; and his parents, returning home and missing him on the road, hasten back to Jerusalem, where they find him giving wonderful and promising specimens of his extraordinary wisdom, Luke ii. 41.

The MANHOOD of CHRIST.

In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, John, being sent by God out of the wilderness, preaches up the approaching of Christ's coming, and exhorts all to prepare for it by repentance and baptism, Matt. iii. 1. Luke iii. 1. John i. 6, 7, 15.

Among the rest that presented themselves to John's baptism, Jesus, being now full thirty years old, offered himself to be baptized by John, Matt. iii. 13. Mark i. 9. Luke iii. 21, 23.

As soon as Jesus is baptized by John, he is declared by a voice from heaven to be Christ the beloved Son of God; Matt. iii. 16. Mark i. 14. Luke iii. 21. John i. 23.

Shortly after his baptism Jesus retires to the wilderness, where he exercised himself with a forty days' continual fast, and various strugglings against the temptations of the devil, Matt. iv. 1. Mark i. 12. Luke iv. 1.

Whilst Jesus was in the desert, doing penance for the sins of mankind, the people generally supposing John to be the Messiah, he openly declares to the messengers of the chief of the Jews, sent on purpose to inquire of him, that he was not Christ, but only his forerunner, who would in a short time appear publicly, Luke iii. 15. John i. 19.

The day after this message of the Jews to John, Jesus returning from the desert, where he had been forty days, John pointeth him out to all present with him: "Behold the Lamb of God; this is he of whom I told you before," John i. 29.

The day following, when John repeated the same testimony of Jesus, two of John's disciples, of which Andrew was one, followed Jesus, John i. 35.

Andrew, charmed with the conversation of his Saviour, the next day brings his brother Simon to Jesus, John i. 41.

A day after, Jesus, travelling from Judæa to Galilee, meets Philip, whom he commands to follow him, John i. 43.

A little while after Philip brings Nathaniel the lawyer, John i. 45.

The third day after Jesus's departure from Judæa, he honoured a wedding in Cana of Galilee, with his presence and that of his new disciples, when, by turning the water into wine, he performed his first miracle, John ii. 1.

After this he comes down to Capernaum with his disciples, John ii. 12.

The passover being at hand, he goes directly from Capernaum to Jerusalem, John ii. 13.

When he came to Jerusalem, he cast the buyers and sellers out of the temple, John ii. 14.

The first Year of CHRIST's Preaching, beginning from the Passover, immediately after his Baptism by JOHN.

This passover being the first from his baptism, Jesus began to preach the Gospel in Jerusalem, and in confirmation of it shewed many signs, which induced much people to believe in him, John ii. 24. and iv. 2.

At this time an eminent person, named Nicodemus, one of the Sanhedrim, by night came to Jesus, who instructs him in the mysteries of the Christian faith, John xxx. 1.

Jesus, leaving the city of Jerusalem, goes into the country of Judæa, preaching as he passes, and commissioning his disciples to baptize, John iii. 22. and iv. 2.

John

John hitherto continued to baptize; but his disciples, observing the great resort of the people to Jesus, were ready to resent it as a diminution of John's honour; but he tells them, his ministry was now near an end, and that he was to give place to the Messiah, John iii. 23.

Soon after this Herod the tetrarch threw John into prison, because he had reprehended him for his incestuous life and other crimes, Matt. xiv. 3. Mark vi. 17. Luke iii. 19.

Which as soon as Jesus heard, he retired from Judæa, out of Herod's reach, and went and preached the Gospel in Galilee, Matt. iv. 12. Mark i. 14. John iv. 1.

Passing through Samaria, he instructs the woman at the well, and teaches the people, staying with them two days, John iv. 4.

Then going to Galilee, he is honourably received by the Galileans, and much respected for the signs he shewed at the passover in Jerusalem, John iv. 4.

When he came into Cana of Galilee, where he performed his first miracle, he is solicited by a certain nobleman to cure his son of a fever, John iv. 46.

Which having performed, he goes to Nazareth, and from thence to Capernaum, where he took up his habitation, Matt. iv. 13.

Thence he went all over Galilee, preaching the Gospel, and healing all manner of diseases, Matt. iv. 17, 23. Mark i. 15.

The multitude thronging about him on the sea-side, he enters into Simon's ship, and teaches the people from thence, and by the miraculous great draught of fishes convinces Simon and Andrew of his power, whom, together with his other two brethren, James and John, he lifts among his disciples; and they immediately quitted the fishing-trade, and followed him, Matt. iv. 18. Mark i. 16. Luke v. 1.

With these disciples he went into the synagogue at Capernaum, and after he had taught there, he cleansed one possessed with an unclean spirit, Mark i. 21. Luke iv. 31.

Going from the synagogue to the house of Peter, he cureth his wife's mother of a fever, Matt. viii. 14. Mark i. 29. Luke iv. 38.

His fame increasing by these miracles, the people bring all their sick and possessed to the door, where, by imposition of hands, he cures them, Matt. viii. 16. Mark i. 32. Luke iv. 40.

Early the next morning he goes from Capernaum into a private place to pray; from whence he went teaching and healing the people all over Galilee, Mark i. 35. Luke iv. 42.

Being very much pressed by the multitude, he had a mind to pass over the lake of Genesareth, Matt. viii. 18.

Whither as he was passing, a scribe offering to be his disciple, is rejected, Matt. viii. 19.

Whilst they were under sail, and Jesus asleep, a violent storm arose, which threatened them with shipwreck; which Jesus, being awaked by his disciples, allays, to their great admiration, Matt. viii. 24. Mark iv. 37. Luke viii. 23.

Being come into the country of the Gergesenes, which is opposite to Galilee, he dispossesses two dæmoniacs in a great presence of people; and permitting the devils to enter into the herd of swine, they ran into the lake, Matt. viii. 28. Mark v. 1. Luke viii. 26.

Returning by shipping into Galilee, he again enters Capernaum, where he heals a poor paralytic that was let down through the roof of the house to him, Matt. ix. 1. Mark ii. 1. Luke v. 18.

Going from this house towards the sea, he sees Matthew sitting at the custom-house, whom he calls from his employment to become his disciple and follower, Matt. ix. 9. Mark ii. 14. Luke v. 27.

Being intreated by Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, to come and heal his daughter, now at the point of death, in his way a woman, by the touch of his garment, is cured of a bloody issue; and he coming to Jairus's house raiseth his daughter from death, Matt. ix. 18. Mark v. 22. Luke viii. 41.

Going from hence, he restores sight to two blind men, and dispossessed a man of a dumb spirit, Matt. ix. 27.

The second Year of CHRIST's Preaching, beginning from the second Passover after his Baptism.

From Galilee Jesus goes up to Jerusalem to the second passover after his baptism.

At the sheep-pool of Bethesda, on the sabbath-day, he healed a man that had been diseased eight-and-thirty years, so perfectly, that he was able to take up his bed and walk; for which fact the Jews reproaching him, he handsomely defends himself, John v. 2.

Again he confutes the Pharisees, who condemned his disciples for plucking the ears of corn, and rubbing them in their hands, and eating them on the sabbath, Matt. xii. 2. Mark ii. 23. Luke vi. 1.

He does the same thing a little after in a synagogue of Galilee, by curing the withered hand on the sabbath-day, Matt. xii. 9. Mark iii. 1. Luke vi. 6.

The Pharisees being very much incensed at these things, Jesus withdraws to the sea-side, and from a vessel there teaches the people, and heals a multitude of sick and dæmoniacs, Matt. xii. 15. Mark iii. 7.

At that time leaving the multitude, he retires to a mountain; and after he had tarried there all night in prayer, in the morning calling his disciples, he out of them chose twelve apostles, Mark iii. 13. Luke vi. 12.

With them descending from the mountain into the champaign country, he preaches to them, and to a vast multitude there present, that excellent sermon which is called the Lord's sermon on the mount, which contains a summary of Christian life, and evangelical perfection, Matt. v. 1. Luke vi. 17.

Then he goes to Capernaum, where, by the bare touch of his hand, he cures a leper, Matt. viii. 1. Mark i. 4. Luke v. 12.

Entering the town, he cures a Centurion's servant of a palsy, Matt. viii. 5. Luke vii. 1.

After this, at the gates of Naim, he meets the corpse of an only son of his mother, carried out to be buried, whom he raises from the dead, and restores to his mother, Luke vii. 11.

John Baptist, hearing of these and other miracles, sends from the prison, where he had been confined by Herod, some of his disciples to Jesus, to be instructed by him, Matt. xi. 2. Luke vii. 18.

They being returned, Jesus gives an ample character of John's person, behaviour, and mission, and severely reprehends the people of the age that would by no means of his be induced to repent of their ways, Matt. xi. 7. Luke vii. 24.

Jesus, dining with one Simon a Pharisee, pardons the penitent Magdalene, Luke vii. 36.

He cureth a dæmoniac blind and dumb at Capernaum, Matt. xii. 22. Luke xi. 14.

He silences the scribes and Pharisees, who calumniate him for these miracles, as if he did them by the help of the devil; and they demand a sign from heaven, Matt. xii. 24. Mark iii. 22. Luke xi. 15.

During these things his kindred come from Nazareth, thinking him to be mad, and are about to seize him, Mark iii. 21, 31.

Some one signifying to him, that his kindred waited to speak with him, he tells them, that they were his mother and his brethren who heard the word of God and kept it, Matt. xiii. 46. Mark iii. 31. Luke viii. 19.

Going from the house to the sea he instructed the multitude, proposing to them the parables of the sower, the tares, mustard, leaven, which in private he explains to his disciples; adding to them the parables of the treasure hid in a field, the pearl of great price, and the net cast into the sea, Matt. xiii. 1. Mark iv. 1. Luke viii. 4.

After this, going again into his own country Nazareth, and preaching there in a synagogue on the sabbath-day, they, instead of receiving him, cast him out of the city, Matt. xiii. 54. Mark vi. 1. Luke iv. 16.

He goes teaching through all the villages of Nazareth, Mark vi. 6.

After that he continues to go about all the cities and villages of Galilee, with his twelve apostles,

apostles, and certain women whom he had healed, and who supplied him with necessaries, Luke viii. 1.

Having instructed his twelve apostles, and given them power to do miracles, he sends them out by two and two to preach the gospel of the kingdom of Christ, Matt. x. 1. Mark vi. 7. Luke ix. 1.

They going through the villages preach the Gospel every-where, cast out devils, anoint the weak with oil, and heal the sick, Mark vi. 12. Luke ix. 6.

Nor is Jesus idle at the same time, for he travels about Galilee, Matt. xi. 1.

About, or rather a little before this time, John the baptist by command of Herod, at the instigation and cunning of Herodias and her daughter, is beheaded in prison, Mark vi. 21, &c.

Herod hearing of the great fame of Jesus, and the miracles he did, suspects him to be John, whom he lately murdered in prison, risen from the dead, Matt. xiv. 1. Mark vi. 14. Luke ix. 7.

The apostles being returned to Jesus, he with them retires into the desert of Bethsaida, beyond the sea of Galilee; whither the multitude following him, after he had instructed them and healed their sick, he fed five thousand of them with five barley loaves and two fishes, twelve baskets of fragments being taken up, Matt. xiv. 13. Mark vi. 30. Luke ix. 10. John vi. 1.

This miracle being performed in the evening, he commands his disciples to cross over the sea, himself retiring to a mountain to pray, Matt. xiv. 22. Mark vi. 5. John vi. 15.

Jesus, seeing his disciples labouring all night against a storm, about the fourth watch, that is, towards morning, came walking upon the sea, which Peter at his command attempted; but being ready to sink, Jesus recovers him, takes him with him into the ship, and quiets the storm, Matt. xiv. 24. Mark vi. 48. John vi. 18.

Going on, short of Genesareth, he heals the sick with only the touch of his cloaths, Matt. xiv. 34. Mark vi. 53.

Then going into a synagogue at Capernaum, and being known by some of those whom he had fed in the desert with bread, he declares to the people that he was the true bread of life, and that his flesh was meat, and his blood drink, to all that take it by way of salvation, John vi. 24.

The third Year of the preaching of CHRIST, beginning from the third Passover after his Baptism.

This passover the holy Jesus went not up to Jerusalem, because he knew the Jews sought to kill him, John vii. 1.

Therefore whilst he spent his time in Galilee, certain lawyers, coming from Jerusalem to Galilee to quarrel with him, disputed about the observation of their antient traditions with him, Matt. xv. 1. Mark vii. 1.

Then Jesus going from Galilee towards the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, dispossesses the woman of Canaan's daughter of a devil, Matt. xv. 21.

From whence returning to the sea of Galilee, he healeth a multitude of sick persons that they brought to him, and among them one who was deaf and dumb, Matt. xv. 29, &c.

At that time compassionating the multitude, who were faint through want of food, he wrought a great miracle, feeding four thousand men with seven loaves and a few little fishes; after which plentiful meal there remained seven baskets full of fragments, Matt. xv. 32. Mark viii. 1.

After which miracle he crossed the sea, and went into the coasts of Magdala and Dalmanutha, Matt. xv. 39. Mark vii. 31.

Whilst he was there, the Pharisees and Sadducees demand a sign of his mission from heaven; which he refusing, going on board a ship, crosses back again, admonishing his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, Matt. xvi. 1. Mark viii. 11.

When he came to Bethsaida, he restored to sight a blind man that sat without the village, Mark viii. 22.

Going from thence to the parts of Cæsarea Philippi, he tries Peter's faith concerning himself, promising upon this rock to build his church, Matt. xvi. 13. Mark viii. 27. Luke ix. 18.

Eight days after the confession of Peter our Lord was transfigured in the mount, where he gave his disciples a taste of that future glory which they were to expect from the merits of the cross, and received a testimony of it from Moses, Elias, and his Father, Matt. xvii. 1. Mark xii. 1. Luke ix. 28.

The day after he went down from the mount with his disciples, and cured a lunatic, casting out a dumb devil, which his disciples had in vain attempted, Matt. xvii. 14. Mark ix. 13. Luke ix. 37.

As he was journeying through Galilee, he again foretells his passion, death, and resurrection, Matt. xvii. 22. Mark xi. 29. Luke ix. 44.

Entering Capernaum, to avoid offence, he commands Peter to pay the tribute-money to the collectors, Matt. xvii. 24.

Being at home, he reproves the inordinate ambition of his disciples, who on the way had contended for supremacy, Matt. xviii. 1. Mark ix. 32. Luke ix. 46.

At the same time he advises them studiously to avoid offences, to admonish an offending brother, and to be ready to forgive all injuries offered to us, by the example of the king that called his servants to an account, and others, Matt. xviii. 6. Mark ix. 41. Luke xvii. 1.

The feast of Tabernacles being now at hand, his kindred, more out of ambition than religion, press him very earnestly to appear publicly in Judæa on the feast-day, and shew himself to the world: but he, making as if he would oblige their expectation, tarried till they were gone, and then went up in private; after that he went with them from Galilee into Judæa, Matt. xix. 1. John vii. 2.

In his journey, being denied entertainment by the Samaritans, his disciples would have had him revenge the affront by calling down fire from heaven, but he reproved their heat; and, on the contrary, cleansed ten lepers, praising the one penitent thankful leper above all the rest, Luke ix. 54. and xvii. 11.

From Samaria he passes beyond Jordan into the borders of Judæa, Matt. xix. 1. Mark x. 1.

Then entering Jerusalem about the midst of the feast of Tabernacles, he taught in the temple with such efficacy and power, that he provoked the Jews to send officers to apprehend him, John vii. 46.

In the evening of the last day of the feast of Tabernacles, he went out of the city to mount Olivet, John viii. 1.

The day following returning from mount Olivet into the temple, he dismisses the woman accused of adultery; shaming his enemies, who treacherously endeavoured to ensnare him, John viii. 12.

Then, in a new discourse, he shewed them who he was; and at length, when the Jews were ready to stone him, he privately withdrew from the temple, John viii. 12.

Passing by a man that had been blind from his birth, he recovered his sight, making an ointment of spittle and clay, and putting it on his eyes. And this was on the sabbath-day, John ix. 1.

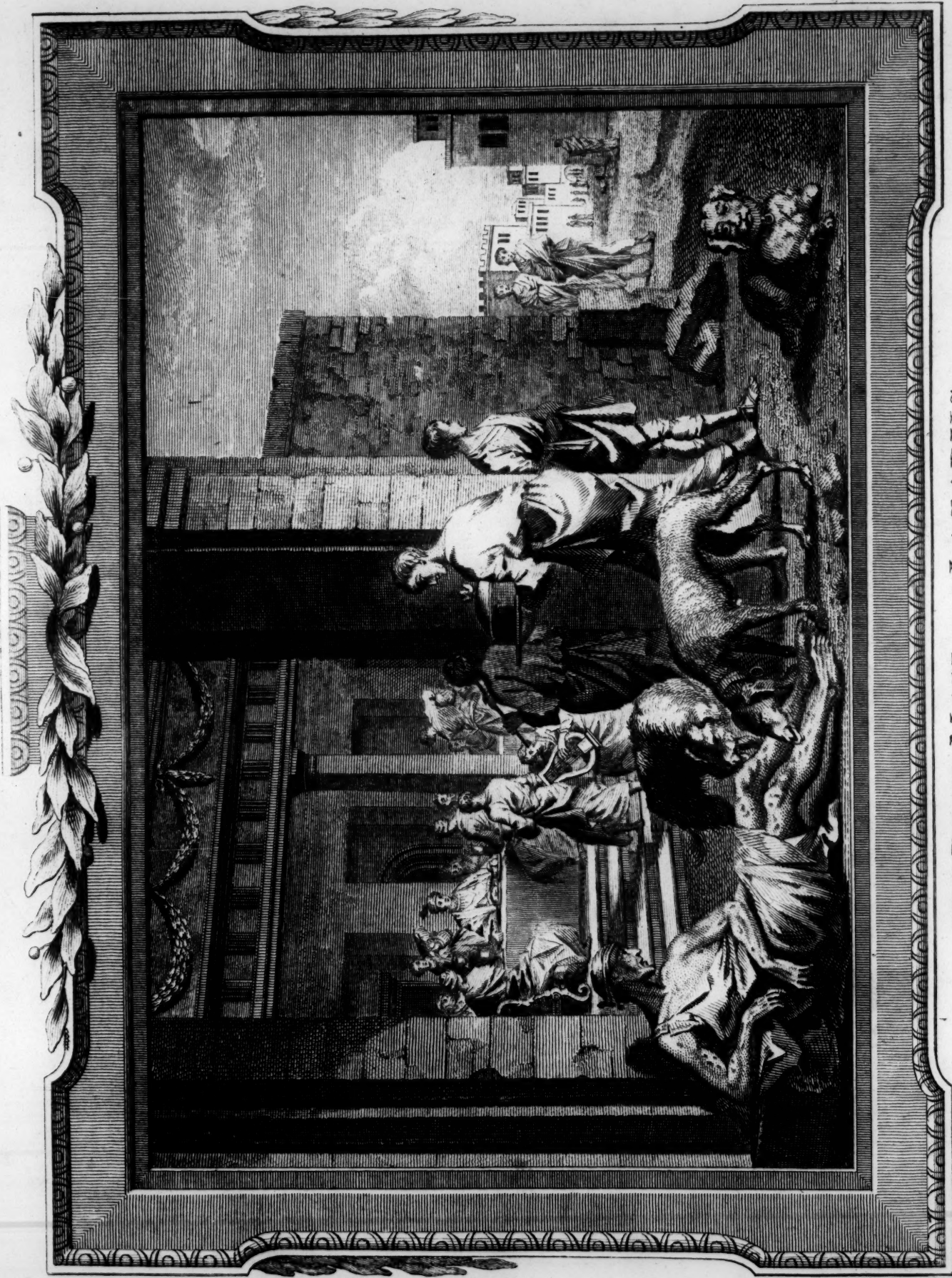
After this he discourses about the true shepherd, the hireling, and the sheep; affirming himself to be the true and only Shepherd, John x. 1.

Then leaving Jerusalem, he travels through the cities and villages of Judæa and Berea, sending seventy disciples two by two, with the same commission he had before given the twelve apostles, to go into every city and village whither he himself was to come, Luke x. 1.

The seventy being returned, he preaches up modest behaviour to his disciples, and thanks God he had lost none of them, Luke x. 17. Matt. xi. 25.

By the application of the parable of the robbed and wounded person relieved by a Samaritan,





The RICH MAN and LAZARUS.

ritan, he instructs an arrogant lawyer, set to tempt him, whom it was we ought to love most, and who was the true neighbour, Luke x. 30.

Being hospitably entertained in Bethany by two sisters, he prefers the holy and devout leisure of Mary, before the solicitous busy service and attendance of Martha. Luke x. 38.

Returning from his usual devotion of prayer, he teaches his disciples the form of prayer, called, The LORD's PRAYER; which is the same he taught them the second year of his preaching in the mount, when he taught the multitude, Luke xi. 1.

Then he teaches them perseverance in prayer, Luke xi. 5. and xviii. 1.

Being invited to a dinner by a certain Pharisee, he with great freedom sharply inveighs against the preposterous cleanliness, ambition, and hypocrisy of the Pharisees, and many other of their vices, Luke xi. 37.

From hence he takes occasion to caution them against covetousness and the over-anxious care for temporal things, with the instance of him that would not divide the inheritance with his brother, Luke xii. 13.

Being acquainted with the death of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, he invites all men to repentance, otherwise, like the barren fig-tree, they would be cut off, Luke xiii. 1.

He cures a woman that had been crooked eighteen years, and reprimanded the ruler of the synagogue who murmured at his working this cure on the sabbath-day, Luke xiii. 11.

After he had gone through many towns and villages, as he was journeying toward Jerusalem, being asked, whether there were but few that should be saved, he advises them to enter in at the strait gate, which being once shut, many should knock in vain, Luke xiii. 22.

The same day, being cautioned by the Pharisees to go from thence to avoid the fury of Herod, he tells them he must die at Jerusalem, Luke xiii. 31.

Being invited to dinner by an eminent Pharisee on the sabbath-day, he cured a man troubled with a dropsey, justifying the legality of the cure from the instance of an ass or ox fallen into a pit. Then he instructs both his host and the guests in many wholesome doctrines, Luke xiv. 1.

In his journey he teaches the multitude what qualifications are necessary for him that would be his disciple, Luke xiv. 25.

He exhorts them to alms-giving, proposing the example of the unjust steward and the rich glutton, Luke xvi. 1, &c.

He confutes the scribes and Pharisees, who murmured because he entertained sinners; proposing three allusions of the lost sheep, the lost groat, and the lost son, Luke xv. 1.

In the winter he returns to Jerusalem at the feast of the dedication, and walking in the temple, in Solomon's porch, he disputes with the Jews about himself, John x. 22.

Who designing to seize him, he withdraws from them; and seeing he could do no good with them, he goes again to the borders of Judæa into Bethany, or Bethabara, the place where John first baptized, and tarried there, John x. 39, 40.

Whither when many people resorted to him, after his usual manner, he taught and healed them, John x. 41. Matt. xix. 2, Mark x. 1.

There he disputes with the lawyers concerning divorces and the firmness of marriage, preferring celibacy to matrimony; together with many other instructions there, Matt. xix. 3. Mark x. 2.

He will not suffer the young children to be kept from him, but laying his hands upon them he blesteth them, Matt. xix. 13. Mark i. 39. Luke xviii. 15.

A wealthy young man is deterred from following Jesus, by his proposing a state of poverty, Matt. xix. 16. Luke xviii. 24.

Upon which occasion he shews them how difficult it is for those who pursue the riches of this world to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and at the same time declares the happiness of those that quit all for the sake of God, Matt. xix. 23. Mark x. 23. Luke xviii. 24.

By proposing the parable of the labourers that were hired to work in the vineyard, he shews

shews them, that it often happens that they who are least in the eye of the world, are esteemed the greatest with God, Matt. xx. 1.

Whilst he was on the borders of Judæa, he receives a message from the two sisters at Bethany, of the sickness of Lazarus; nor would he stir from thence till he had heard that Lazarus was dead, John xi. 1.

Coming to Bethany, he comforted Mary and Martha with good hope, bringing to life their brother Lazarus, who had been four days dead, John xi. 17.

Many of those who were present, at the working this miracle, were induced to believe in Jesus, upon which the chief priests and the Pharisees resolutely determine his destruction, John xi. 46.

Wherefore Jesus with his disciples returned from Bethany to the borders of Judæa, to a country near the wilderness, unto a city called Ephraim, John xi. 54.

After he had remained there some days in private, the passover being at hand, he goes up to Jerusalem, in his journey thither hinting to his disciples apart the death of the cross, and other things which he was to suffer there, John xi. 65. Matt. xx. 17. Mark x. 32. Luke xviii. 31.

Notwithstanding this discourse, that his death was at hand, the disciples being possessed with the notion that he was now going to Jerusalem to take possession of his kingdom, the sons of Zebedee intreat him by their mother, that they might have the priority in his kingdom; which request very much disgusted the rest of the apostles, who hitherto were apt to think too well of themselves, Matt. xx. 20. Mark x. 35. Luke xix. 11.

Going from thence he passes directly over to the city of Jericho, and is very friendly entertained by Zaccheus the Publican, Luke xix. 1.

Going from that city towards Jerusalem, he restored sight to two blind beggars, the name of one of whom was Bartimeus the son of Timeus, Matt. xx. 29. Mark x. 46. Luke xviii. 35.

Prosecuting his journey, before the six days of the passover; that is, the day of preparation, or Friday before the passover, he came to Bethany, John xii. 1.

There the day following, being the sabbath-day, he is honourably received and entertained at supper in the house of Simon the Leper, Lazarus sitting at table with him, and Martha attending, whilst Mary pours a vial of rich balsam or unguent upon his head, Matt. xvi. 26. Mark xiv. 3. John xii. 2.

The disciples thinking much of this profuse waste of the unguent, as they thought, and especially Judas the traitor, they are severely reprehended by the Lord, Matt. xxvi. 8. Mark xiv. 4. John xii. 4.

The day after, which we call the Lord's-day, going from Bethany to Bethphage, and to Mount Olivet from thence, sitting on an ass, which he commanded to be brought, he permitted his disciples to spread their garments thereon, and made his public entry into Jerusalem, the multitude all the way congratulating his appearance with cutting down branches of trees, strewing their cloaths in the way, and with acclamations of joy, crying out, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," the King of Israel, Matt. xxi. 1. Mark xi. 1. John xii. 12.

Coming near to Jerusalem, as soon as he saw it, he wept over it, and foretold its destruction, which would certainly come, because the people would not know the time of their visitation, Luke xix. 41.

With this sort of pomp he enters the city, and visiting the temple first, he purged it from the pollutions of the merchants, and adorned it with many cures and gifts of salvation and health, Matt. xxi. 12. Mark xi. 15. Luke xix. 45.

The chief Jews being incensed at these things, and on the other hand the Gentiles earnestly pressing to see Jesus, he is glorified of his Father by a voice from heaven, Matt. xxi. 15. Luke xix. 39. John xii. 20.

In the evening going out of the city to Bethany, and returning the day after, which was Monday, he cursed the barren fig-tree; and after he had spent that day in teaching in the temple, he again went out of the city to Bethany, Matt. xxi. 17. Mark xi. 11.

Early on Tuesday morning, as he returned to the city, his disciples observing the fig-

fig-tree, which he had before cursed, and was dried up by the roots, he taught them the efficacy and virtue of faith, Matt. xxvi. 20. Mark xi. 20.

Afterwards being in the temple, and the chief priests and rulers of the people asking him by what authority he did these things; he very handsomely confutes them, and plainly accuses them, that they, knowing him to be Christ, would not acknowledge him, lest they should lose some advantage of their own; wherefore he foretells their ruin, Matt. xxi. 23. Mark xi. 27. Luke xx. 1.

But when the Jews durst not lay hands on Jesus for fear of the people, they endeavour to ensnare him in his discourse, proposing several cunning intricate questions to him about the tribute, resurrection, and greatest commandment: from all which he extricated himself by his wise and inoffensive answers, Matt. xxii. 15. Mark xiii. 13. Luke xx. 20.

At last Jesus put a question to them concerning the twofold nature of Christ, which unexpected difficulty they declared they could not answer, Matt. xxii. 41. Mark xii. 35. Luke xx. 41.

Then he inveighs severely against their hypocrisy, and other crimes, threatening them with divine vengeance, Matt. xxiii. 1. Mark xii. 15. Luke xx. 45.

Afterwards, as he sat opposite to the treasury, and saw the many presents there offered, he prefers the gift of the poor widow, which consisted but of two mites, before all the offerings of the wealthy, Mark xii. 41. Luke xxi. 1.

Then, as he was going out of the temple, his disciples beginning to consider and admire the beauty of the structure, he foretold the ruin of it, Matt. xxiv. 1. Mark xiii. 1. Luke xxi. 5.

Going afterwards to the mount of Olives, and seating himself opposite to the temple, being asked of his disciples when these things should be, and what sign there would be of their coming, and the consummation of all things, he answered, in the first place, the signs of the destruction of Jerusalem would be the same with those of the end of the world: then he tells them the particular sign of the ruin of Jerusalem and the temple; and finally, the signs peculiar to the consummation of the whole world, Matt. xxiv. 3. Mark xiii. 3. Luke xxi. 7.

And yet, notwithstanding these signs, he tells them, the day of his coming is uncertain, and therefore they must watch, lest the time catch them unprepared; proposing at the same time several parables for the help of their understanding, as that of the ten virgins, the slothful servant, &c. Matt. xxiv. 36. Mark xiii. 32. Luke xxi. 34. Matt. xxv. 1.

Lastly, he gives them a formal description of the last judgment, Matt. xxv. 31.

Drawing out the time till midnight, with these sorts of discourses, that is, towards the beginning of Wednesday, Jesus adds, that after two days he should be crucified, namely on the very passover, Matt. xxvi. 1.

By break of day on Wednesday, Judas enters into a conspiracy against his Lord and Master with the chief priests, about apprehending him, agreeing with them for thirty pieces of silver, Matt. xxvi. 3, 14.

On Thursday, about noon, Jesus sent two of his disciples into the city, to prepare the paschal entertainment for them all in a house which they never before knew; but by the matter of it and other circumstances they find it, and do as he commanded them, Matt. xxvi. 17.

The fourth Year of CHRIST, beginning from the fourth Passover after his Baptism.

The first day of this year, that is, on the feast-day of the passover, or first day of unleavened bread, which began on Thursday at sun-rising, Jesus ate the paschal lamb with his apostles at Jerusalem, Matt. xxvi. 20.

After the eating of the lamb, and the common supper, Jesus taking a basin of water washed his apostles' feet, John xiii. 1.

After this he institutes his last supper, commanding them always to do it in remembrance of him, Matt. xxvi. 26.

Then he discovers to them that he should that very night be betrayed by one of them, Matt. xxvi. 21.

Judas being marked from the rest by taking of the sop, goes out and finishes his treason, John xiii. 26.

After these things the disciples began again to dispute about priority, Luke xxii. 24.

Whereupon Jesus recommends to them the practice of humility, and the new command of mutual love, promising to them all the honour of the kingdom of heaven, Luke xxii. 26.

Then he foretells his departure and death; and Peter confidently promising to follow him, where-ever he went, Jesus prophesies of his triple denial of him, John xiii. 36.

By-and-by, for the consolation of his disciples, whom he perceived very sad, in a long sermon, he, by various methods, raised their dejected spirits, and fortified them against present evils, adding likewise a prayer, whereby he not only recommends them, but all that believe, to the Father.

This sermon he enlarges and finishes on the way as he goes from the city towards the mount of Olives, John xv. 16.

In his walk thither he foretells his disciples that they will be all very much offended; and Peter with great assurance boasting himself more on his fortitude than the rest, Jesus declares and foretells that his fall shall be greater than that of any of the others, Matt. xxv. 31.

As these things were transacted, passing the brook Cedron about midnight, he came to a village called Gethsemane, situated at the foot of the mount of Olives, where he entered into the garden to pray, according to his usual custom, Matt. xxvi. 36.

There taking Peter and the sons of Zebedee apart from the rest of the apostles, he began to shew a very great anxiety and heaviness of spirit, insomuch that he sweated water and blood, Matt. xxvi. 37.

Having prayed three times to his Father, an angel from heaven came and comforted him, Matt. xxvi. 39.

Coming from prayer, he chides the sleeping disciples, telling them the traitor was at hand, Matt. xxvi. 45.

Then going to meet the traitor and his gang, he permitted him to give him the treacherous signal, which was a kiss, Matt. xxvi. 48.

But though he suffered Judas to give him the signal kiss, yet he did not permit them immediately to lay hands on him; but asking the multitude whom they sought, he at one word laid them prostrate, John xviii. 3.

After they were recovered from their surprise, and had heard him expostulating with, and forbidding them to do any harm to his apostles, with other seasonable things, they were permitted to apprehend him, Matt. xxvi. 55.

Which they no sooner attempted, than Peter, drawing his sword, cuts off the right ear of Malchus, a servant of the high-priest; for which Jesus reprehends him sharply, and forbids him the use of the sword under the penalty of a curse, Matt. xxvi. 51.

Jesus being thus apprehended, is first carried before Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas the high-priest, John xviii. 13.

By-and-by being sent from Annas to Caiaphas the high-priest, in whose house the council met, he is there first of all confronted with false witnesses, Matt. xxvi. 59.

Afterwards being examined about his disciples and his doctrine, for answering him very freely, an attendant of the high-priest gave him a blow on the face, John xviii. 19.

Lastly, Jesus being asked whether he was the Christ the Son of God, he, confessing it, is condemned as worthy of death, Matt. xxvi. 63.

Whilst these things passed within, Peter, being in the high-priest's hall, is known to be of Jesus's family by the maid and servants, upon which Peter three times denies his Lord; but the third time, hearing the cock crow, he came to himself, Matt. xxvi. 69.

Jesus being thus condemned, is exposed to all the rude insults of being spit upon, struck on the head and face, and the like, being the remaining part of the night treated after this ludicrous and ridiculous manner, Mark xiv. 65.

Very

Very early in the morning he is brought before the council, and again condemned, because he confessed himself to be the Son of God, Luke xxii. 66.

Being a third time condemned, he is led bound, and delivered to Pilate the governor, to be slain by him, Matt. xxvii. 1.

Pilate the governor being unwilling to put Jesus to death (though the chiefs of the Jews had already condemned him), unless they shewed cause, they accused Jesus to him, saying, That he called himself Christ the King of the Jews, John xviii. 29.

Jesus being examined separately by Pilate, whether he was the king of the Jews or not, he answered, He was; but not according to the manner of the kings of this world, Matt. xxvii. 11.

Pilate being very inclinable to release Jesus, the Jews oppose it with all their might; crying out, that he was a seditious person, and disturber of the people from Galilee even to Judæa, Luke xxiii. 4.

Pilate, hearing that Jesus was of Galilee, that he might the more plausibly extricate himself from the trouble of the trial, sends him to Herod the tetrarch of Galilee, who at that time was at Jerusalem, Luke xxiii. 6.

But Herod being disappointed in his expectation concerning Jesus, sends him away in contempt, in mockery putting on him a white robe, Luke xxiii. 8.

Pilate, considering Jesus as an innocent person, endeavours to persuade the Jews to accept of his life as a donative from him to the people at this paschal festival: but they, preferring Barabbas the thief before the innocent Jesus, demanded a pardon for Barabbas, but cried out most furiously for executing Jesus, Matt. xxvii. 15.

But when this method also proved ineffectual for the saving of Jesus, Pilate commanded Jesus to be scourged: and being crowned with thorns, disgraced all manner of ways, and ridiculed as a king in misery, in this wretched condition, thinking to move them to pity, he shews him a sad spectacle to the people, Luke xxiii. 15.

Being not able this way to satisfy them, but that the more he strove to appease them, the more outrageous they grew, crying out, "Crucify him, crucify him;" he still opposes their obstinacy, which they as warmly encounter: for fearing that an offence against man might be pardoned, they bring a new accusation against Jesus, affirming that he made himself the Son of God, John xix. 7.

But Pilate, disdaining to try Jesus by the Jewish laws, still moved to have him acquitted; whereupon they seeing he protracted time only to save Jesus, openly clamoured, and threatened him with Cæsar's displeasure: then Pilate took his place on the tribunal, calling for Jesus to be set before him, John xix. 13.

Whilst Pilate was on the bench, his wife sent to him, desiring him not to meddle with that just person Jesus, for she had suffered very much in her dreams concerning him, Matt. xxvi. 19.

Pilate having all manner of ways testified Jesus's innocence, even by the public washing of his hands in open court, declaring him altogether unworthy of death; yet when the Jews so obstinately persisted, that nothing but his blood will satisfy them, and that they readily took the guilt of it upon themselves and their posterity, he at last gave way to their desire, and delivered Jesus to them, John xix. 15.

Then the soldiers brought Jesus loaden with his cross from the Prætorium without the city, a vast multitude of all sorts of people following, Luke xxiii. 27.

After they had led him without the gates of the city, taking the cross from Jesus, for expedition sake, they force one Simon of Cyrene to carry it, Matt. xxvii. 32.

Among the multitude that followed Jesus there were certain women of Jerusalem that deplored the calamities and afflictions of Jesus, who bid them mourn for themselves, and not for him; foretelling at the same time the vengeance that was to fall on them and their children, Luke xxiii. 27.

When he was come to mount Calvary, the place of the execution, they gave Jesus wine mingled with myrrh, which he refused to drink; and likewise wine mingled with gall, which he also refused, Matt. xxvii. 34.

After

After this they lay him on the cross, fastening him with nails to it; he at the same time praying for his crucifiers, Luke xxiii. 33.

Then fixing on the cross the title of "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews," they set up the cross with Jesus on it, John xix. 19.

And to add the greater ignominy to his innocence, they crucify two thieves with him, one upon each side, Matt. xxvii. 38.

Then the soldiers, before the face of the crucified Jesus, divide his garments, and cast lots, John xix. 23.

The multitude looking on, the rulers of the people with the soldiers deride and insult the holy Jesus in his agony with the utmost contempt, Luke xxiii. 35.

One of the thieves that was crucified with him did the same, but is reproved by the other, justifying Jesus, and condemning themselves; and, though late, recognizing his king and Saviour, he prays him to remember him when he comes into his kingdom, Luke xxiii. 29.

Jesus from the cross, though in the greatest torment, seeing his mother, recommends her to the care of his favourite disciple standing by, John xix. 25.

From the time that Jesus hung on the cross, there was an universal darkness till three of the clock, Luke xxiii. 44.

About three of the clock Jesus cried out, "Eli, Eli," &c. Mark xv. 34.

A little after Jesus saying, "I thirst," and they offering him vinegar to drink, he refused it, adding, "It is finished," John xix. 28.

Then crying aloud, "Father, into thine hands I commend my spirit," and bowing his head, he gave up the ghost, Matt. xxvii. 50.

Whilst these things passed, the veil of the temple was rent in two, the earth trembled, and many strange and wonderful things happened: which the captain of the Roman guard, together with the soldiers and multitude, observing, they were so astonished, that they smote their breasts, and returned home, justifying Jesus's innocence, Luke xxiii. 47.

The chief of the Jews having obtained leave from Pilate that the legs of the criminals might be broken, in order to take them from the cross by reason of the approaching sabbath, they break the legs of the two thieves; but coming to Jesus, and finding him already dead, they did not break his legs; but one of the soldiers thrust a lance through his side, out of which there immediately issued water and blood, John xix. 51.

After these things Joseph of Arimathea, having obtained license from the governor, takes the body of Jesus from the cross, embalms it with spices and perfumes, wraps it up in fine searcloth; and, with the help of Nicodemus, a former disciple of Christ, buries it in a new tomb of his own, which he had but a little before ordered to be made for himself, John xix. 38.

Jesus being buried the evening before the sabbath, the princes and chief of the Jews, having obtained the grant of a guard from the governor, set them to watch the body of Jesus, to prevent, as they vainly imagined, his resurrection on the third day, sealing the grave-stone with their signet, and rolling a great stone to the entrance of the sepulchre, Matt. xxvii. 62.

On the evening of the same day, the sabbath being ended, Mary Magdalen, and other religious women, having provided spices to continue the embalment, early the next morning came to the sepulchre, with an intent to anoint and preserve the body of Jesus, John xx. 1.

As they approached the holy sepulchre, they saw an angel, which had descended from heaven, and moved the stone from the entrance of the sepulchre, sitting on it, Matt. xxviii. 2.

The appearance of the angel, whose descent was attended with a mighty concussion of the earth and air, so affrighted the soldiers who guarded the sepulchre, that they were almost dead with fear, Matt. xxviii. 4.

The women entering the sepulchre, the angel bids them be of good courage, tells them that Jesus was risen; bids them come farther into the sepulchre, that they might see the empty grave, where the Lord had lain, which they accordingly did, Matt. xxviii. 15.

As the women went out of the sepulchre, and not thoroughly persuaded of the Lord's resurrection, two angels more appeared to them, and told them the same thing, Luke xxiv. 4.

Upon which being confirmed in the truth of his resurrection, they hasten to the apostles as fast as they can, declaring and affirming that the body of Jesus was not in the sepulchre, and that they had seen a vision of angels, who told them that he was alive, Luke xxiv. 9, 23.

Hereupon Peter and John ran to the sepulchre, where John arrived first, and not finding the body of Jesus they returned home wondering, John xx. 3.

Mary Magdalen returned to the sepulchre, and continuing there weeping, Jesus shewed himself alive to her first, John xx. 11.

When Mary Magdalen had informed the other holy women of this, they all haste together to the apostles to tell them what had happened; and as they went, Jesus met them by the way, shewing himself alive to them, Matt. xxviii. 9.

After these things the angels disappearing, the soldiers that guarded the sepulchre went into the city; and being corrupted with money by the high-priest and rulers, spread abroad a report, that the disciples of Jesus came privately in the night, and stole away the body, Matt. xxviii. 11, &c.

The women affirming Jesus to be alive, and the apostles not believing them, Jesus at last appeared to Peter, Luke xxiv. 34.

After this he appeared to Cleophas and another disciple as they were going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 13.

Last of all, on the evening of the first sabbath after the crucifixion, that is on the Lord's day, Jesus appeared to all the apostles except Thomas, and did eat and drink with them, John xx. 19.

Thomas refusing to believe his brethren, the eighth day after the passion Jesus again appeared to them, and permitted Thomas to satisfy his incredulity by feeling his wounds, John xx. 24.

The disciples going from hence to Galilee, as Jesus had commanded them, he meets them at the sea of Tiberias, and there dines with them, John xx. 1.

Afterwards he appears to a great number of his disciples in the mount as he had appointed, Matt. xxviii. 16.

And having for forty days conversed with his disciples, and talked with them concerning the kingdom of God, he in the sight of them all ascended into heaven, Acts i. 3. where he sits at the right hand of the Father, with whom he governs the world, and particularly his church, which he purchased with his own blood, Mark xvi. 19.

LET us ever remember, that the great doctrine of the gospel of grace and mercy vouchsafed to all penitent sinners, through Christ Jesus, cannot but greatly contribute to their consolation and encouragement. Let it be granted, that the hope of pardon is essential to the happiness of fallen creatures, and one of its first principles; yet, considering the doubts and suspicions which are apt to arise in a mind conscious of guilt, it is undoubtedly a great and inestimable favour to be relieved, in this respect, by a messenger from Jehovah himself. It is our peculiar happiness, that we are not left to depend upon consequential reasonings, which the bulk of mankind are little used to; but are assured, that if it be given us truly and unfeignedly to repent, we shall, through the mediation and work of Christ, receive the full remission of past sins, and by his grace be restored to the same state and favour with our Maker as if we had never transgressed his laws. Here the gospel triumphs. With these assurances it abounds. Upon this head the declarations and gracious invitations of our blessed Saviour and his apostles are so express and full, that every one who is divinely brought to believe them, may banish every doubt and fear, and rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

THE
LIVES AND SUFFERINGS
OF THE
APOSTLES,
EVANGELISTS, DISCIPLES, &c.
THOSE EARLY MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

THE LIFE OF ST. PETER.

TRANSACTIONS OF ST. PETER, FROM THE TIME OF HIS BEING ELECTED TO THE APOSTLESHIP, TO THE LAST PASSOVER OF HIS BLESSED MASTER, AND HIS SUBSEQUENT CRUCIFIXION; AND AFTERWARDS, FROM THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST, TO THE DISPERSION OF THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM.

THE land of Palestine was, at and before the coming of our blessed Saviour, distinguished into three several provinces, Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee. This last was divided into the upper and the lower. In the upper, called also Galilee of the Gentiles, within the division anciently belonging to the tribe of Naphtali, stood Bethsaida, formerly an obscure and inconsiderable village, till lately re-edified and enlarged by Philip the tetrarch, by him advanced to the title and place of a city, replenished with inhabitants, and fortified with power and strength; and in honour of Julia, the daughter of Augustus Cæsar, by him styled Julias. It was situated upon the banks of the sea of Galilee, and had a wilderness on the other side, thence called the desert of Bethsaida, whither our Saviour used often to retire, the privacies and solitudes of the place advantageously ministering to divine contemplation. But Bethsaida was not so remarkable for this adjoining wilderness, as itself was memorable for a worse sort of barrenness, ingratitude and unprofitableness under the influences of Christ's sermons and miracles, thence severely upbraided by him, and threatened with one of his deepest woes, "Woe unto thee, Chorazin; woe unto thee, Bethsaida," &c. A woe that, it seems, stuck close to it; for, whatever it was at this time, one, who surveyed it in the last age, tells us, that it was shrunk again into a very mean and small village, consisting only of a few cottages of Moors and wild Arabs; and later travellers have since assured us, that even these are dwindled away into one poor cottage at this day. So fatally does sin undermine the greatest and goodliest places; so certainly does God's word take place, and not one iota or tittle either of his promises or threatenings will fall to the ground. Next to the honour that was done it by our Saviour's presence, who living chiefly in these parts frequently resorted hither, it had nothing greater to recommend it to the notice of posterity, than that (besides some other of the apostles) it was the birth-place of St. Peter; a person how inconsiderable soever in his private fortunes, yet of great note and eminence, as one of the prime embassadors of the Son of God, to whom both sacred and ecclesiastical stories give, though not a superiority, a precedence in the college of apostles.

2. The particular time of Peter's birth cannot be ascertained, no probable footsteps or intimations being left of it: in the general, we may conclude him at least ten years older than

than his Master; his married condition, and settled course of life at his first coming to Christ, and that authority and respect which the gravity of his person procured him amongst the rest of the apostles, can speak him no less: but for any thing more particular and positive in this matter, I see no reason to affirm. Indeed, might we trust the account which one (who pretends to calculate his nativity with ostentation enough) has given of it, we are told that he was born three days before the blessed virgin, and just seventeen before the incarnation of our Saviour. But let us view his account.

Nat. est an.	ab orbe cond.	{ 4034 }	Anno	{ Octav. August. }	{ 8 }	Anno	{ Herodis reg. }	{ 20 }
	à diluvio							
	U. C.							
		{ 2378 }		{ à 1 ^o ejus consul. }	{ 24 }		{ ante b. virg. }	{ 3 }
		{ 734 }		{ à pugna Actiac. }	{ 12 }		{ ante Ch. nat. }	{ 17 }

When I met with such a pompous train of epocha's, the least I expected was truth and certainty. This computation he grounds upon the date of St. Peter's death, placed (as elsewhere he tells us) by Bellarmine in the eighty-sixth year of his age, so that recounting from the year of Christ sixty-nine, when Peter is commonly said to have suffered, he runs up his age to his birth, and spreads it out in so many several dates. But alas, all is built upon a sandy bottom: for, besides his mistake about the year of the world, few of his dates hold due correspondence. But the worst of it is, that, after all this, Bellarmine (upon whose single testimony all this fine fabric is erected) says no such thing, but only supposes, merely for argument's sake, that St. Peter might very well be eighty-six (it is erroneously printed seventy-six) years old at the time of his martyrdom. So far will confidence, or ignorance, or both, carry men aside; if it could be a mistake, and not rather a bold imposing upon the world. But this is enough, and perhaps more than it deserves.

3. Being circumcised according to the rites of the Mosaic law, the name given him at his circumcision was Simon, or Simeon, a name common amongst the Jews, especially in their later times. This was afterwards by our Saviour not abolished, but additioned with the title of Cephas, which, in Syriac (the vulgar language of the Jews at that time) signifying a stone, or rock, was thence derived into the Greek, Πέτρος, and by us, Peter: so far was Hefychius out, when rendering Πέτρος by ὁ Ἐπιλυων, an expounder or interpreter: probably deriving it from פֶּתֶר, which signifies, to explain and interpret. By this new imposition our Lord seemed to denote the firmness and constancy of his faith, and his vigorous activity in building up the church, as a spiritual house, upon the true rock, the living and corner stone, chosen of God, and precious, as St. Peter himself expresses it. Nor can our Saviour be understood to have hereby conferred upon him any peculiar supremacy or sovereignty above, much less over the rest of the apostles; for in respect of the great trust committed to them, and their being sent to plant Christianity in the world, they are all equally styled foundations. Nor is it reconcileable either to scripture or reason to suppose, that, by this name, our Lord should design the person of Peter to be that very rock upon which his church was to be built. In a fond imitation of this new name given to St. Peter, they who pretend to be his successors in the see of Rome usually lay by their own, and assume a new name upon their advancement to the apostolic chair; it being one of the first questions which the cardinals put to the new elected pope, "by what name he will please to be called." This custom first began about the year 844, when Peter di Bocca-porco (or Swine's-mouth) being chosen pope, changed his name into Sergius the second: probably not so much to avoid the uncomeliness of his own name, as if unbecoming the dignity of his place (for this being but his paternal name, would after have been no part of his pontifical style and title), as out of a mighty reverence to St. Peter, accounting himself not worthy to bear his name, though it was his own baptismal name. Certain it is, that none of the bishops of that see ever assumed St. Peter's name, and some who have had it as their christian name before, have laid it aside upon their election to the papacy. But to return to our apostle.

4. His father was Jonah, probably a fisherman of Bethsaida, for the sacred story takes no farther notice of him, than by the bare mention of his name; and I believe there had been

been no great danger of mistake, though Metaphrastes had not told us, that it was not Jonas the prophet, who came out of the belly of the whale. Brother he was to St. Andrew the apostle, and some question there is amongst the ancients which was the elder brother. Epiphanius (probably from some tradition current in his time) clearly adjudges it to St. Andrew, herein universally followed by those of the church of Rome, that the precedency given to St. Peter may not seem to be put upon the account of his seniority. But to him we may oppose the authority of St. Chrysostom, a person equal both in time and credit, who expressly says, that though Andrew came later into life than Peter, yet he first brought him to the knowledge of the Gospel: which Baronius, against all pretence of reason, would understand of his entering into eternal life. Besides, St. Jerom, Cassian, Bede, and others, are for St. Peter being elder brother; expressly ascribing it to his age, that he, rather than any other, was president of the college of apostles. However it was, it sounds not a little to the honour of their father (as of Zebedee also in the like case), that of but twelve apostles two of his sons were taken into the number. In his youth he was brought up to fishing, which we may guess to have been the staple trade of Bethsaida (which hence probably was borrowed its name, signifying an house, or habitation of fishing; though others render it by hunting, the word $\pi\alpha\iota\sigma\mu\alpha$ equally being either), much advantaged herein by the neighbourhood of the lake of Genesareth, on whose banks it stood), called also the sea of Galilee, and the sea of Tiberias, according to the mode of the Hebrew language, wherein all greater confluences of waters are called seas. Of this lake the Jews have a saying, that "of all the seven seas which God created, he made choice of none but the sea of Genesareth:" which, however intended by them, is true only in the respect that our blessed Saviour made choice of it, to honour it with the frequency of his presence, and the power of his miraculous operations. In length it was an hundred furlongs, and about forty over; the water of it pure and clear, sweet, and most fit to drink; stored it was with several sorts of fish, different both in kind and taste from those in other places. Here Peter closely followed the exercise of his calling; from whence, it seems, he afterwards removed to Capernaum (probably upon his marriage, at least frequently resided there), for there we meet with his house, and there we find him paying tribute: an house, over which, Nicephorus tells us, that Helen, the mother of Constantine, erected a beautiful church to the honour of St. Peter. This place was equally advantageous for the managing of his trade, standing upon the influx of Jordan into the sea of Galilee, and where he might as well reap the fruits of an honest and industrious diligence. A mean, I confess it was, and a more servile course of life, as which, besides the great pains and labour it required, exposed him to all the injuries of wind and weather, to the storms of the sea, the darkness and tempestuousness of the night, and all to make a very small return. An employment, whose restless troubles, constant hardships, frequent dangers, and amazing horrors, are (for the satisfaction of the learned reader) elegantly described by Oppian, whose poems may be justly styled golden verses, receiving, from the emperor Antonius, a piece of gold for every verse.

But meanness is no bar in God's way; the poor, if virtuous, are as dear to heaven as the wealthy and the honourable, equally alike to him, with whom "there is no respect of persons." Nay, our Lord seemed to cast a peculiar honour upon this profession, when afterwards calling him, and some others of the same trade, from catching of fish, to be (as he told them) "fishers of men."

5. And here we may justly reflect upon the wise and admirable methods of the divine providence, which, in planting and propagating the Christian religion in the world, made choice of such mean and unlikely instruments; that he should hide these things from the wise and prudent, and reveal them unto babes, men that had not been educated in the academy, and the schools of learning, but brought up to a trade, to catch fish, and mend nets; most of the apostles being taken from the meanest trades, and all of them (St. Paul excepted) unfurnished by any arts of learning, and the advantages of liberal and ingenuous education: and yet these were the men that were designed to run down the world, and to overturn the learning of the prudent. Certainly had human wisdom been to manage the business, it would have taken quite other measures, and chosen out the profoundest

profoundest rabbins, the acutest philosophers, the smoothest orators, such as would have been most likely by strength of reason, and arts of rhetoric, to triumph over the minds of men, to grapple with the stubbornness of the Jews, and baffle the finer notions and speculations of the Greeks. We find that those sects of philosophy, that gained most credit in the heathen world, did it this way, by their eminence in some arts and sciences, whereby they recommended themselves to the acceptance of the wiser and more ingenious part of mankind. Julian the apostate thinks it a reasonable exception against the Jewish prophets, that they were incompetent messengers and interpreters of the divine will, because they had not their minds cleared and purged, by passing through the circle of polite arts and learning. Why, now herein lies the wonder of it, that the first preachers of the gospel should be such rude and unlearned men, and yet so suddenly, so powerfully prevail over the learned world, and conquer so many who had the greatest parts and abilities, and the strongest prejudices against it, by the simplicity of the gospel. When Celsus objected that the apostles were but a company of mean and illiterate persons, sorry mariners and fishermen, Origen quickly returns upon him with this answer: "That hence it was plainly evident, that they taught christianity by a divine power, when such persons were able with such an uncontrouled success to subdue men to the obedience of his word; for that they had no eloquent tongues, no subtle and discursive head, none of the refined and rhetorical arts of Greece, to conquer the minds of men. For my part (says he in another place), I verily believe that the holy Jesus purposely made use of such preachers of his doctrine, that there might be no suspicion that they came instructed with arts of sophistry, but that it might be clearly manifest to all the world that there was no crafty design in it, and that they had a divine power going along with them, which was more efficacious than the greatest volubility of expression, or ornaments of speech, or the artifices which were used in the Grecian compositions. Had it not been for this divine power that upheld it (as he elsewhere argues), the Christian religion must needs have sunk under those weighty pressures that lay upon it, having not only to contend with the potent opposition of the senate, emperors, people, and the whole power of the Roman empire, but to conflict with those home-bred wants and necessities wherewith its own professors were oppressed and burdened.

6. It could not but greatly vindicate the apostles from all suspicion of forgery and imposture, in the thoughts of sober and unbiassed persons, to see their doctrine readily entertained by men of the most discerning and inquisitive minds. Had they dealt only with the rude and the simple, the idiot and the unlearned, there might have been some pretence to suspect that they lay in wait to deceive, and designed to impose upon the world by crafty and insinuating arts and methods. But, alas, they had other persons to deal with, men of the acutest wits and most profound abilities, the wisest philosophers, and most subtle disputants, able to weigh an argument with the greatest accuracy, and to decline the force of the strongest reasonings; and who had their parts edged with the keenest prejudices of education, and a mighty veneration for the religion of their country, a religion that for so many ages had governed the world, and taken firm possession of the minds of men. And yet, notwithstanding all these disadvantages, these plain men conquered the wise and learned, and brought them over to that doctrine that was despised and scorned, opposed and persecuted, and that had nothing but its own native excellence to recommend it. A clear evidence that there was something in it beyond the craft and power of men: "Is not this (says an elegant apologist, making his address to the heathens) enough to make you believe and entertain it, to consider that in so short a time it has diffused itself over the whole world, civilized the most barbarous nations, softened the roughest and most intractable tempers? that the greatest wits and scholars, orators, grammarians, rhetoricians, lawyers, physicians, and philosophers, have quitted their formerly dear and beloved sentiments, and heartily embraced the precepts and doctrines of the gospel?" Upon this account Theodoret does with no less truth than elegance insult and triumph over the heathens: he tells them, that whoever would be at the pains to compare the best law-makers, either amongst the Greeks or Romans, with our fishermen and publicans, would soon perceive what a divine virtue and efficacy there was in them above all others,

others, whereby they not only conquered their neighbours (the Greeks and Romans), but brought over the most barbarous nations to a compliance with the laws of the gospel; and that not by force of arms, not by numerous bands of soldiers, not by methods of torture and cruelty, but by meek persuasives and convincing the world of the excellence and usefulness of those laws which they propounded to them. A thing which the wisest and best men of the heathen world could never do, to make their *dogmata* and institutions universally obtain: nay, that Plato himself could never, by all his plausible and insinuating arts, make his laws to be entertained by his own dear Athenians. He farther shews them, that the laws published by our fishermen and tent-makers could never be abolished (like those made by the best of them) by the policies of Caius, the power of Claudius, the cruelties of Nero, or any of the succeeding emperors; but still they went on "conquering and to conquer," and made millions both of men and women willing to embrace flames, and to encounter death in its most horrid shapes, rather than disown and forsake them: whereof he calls to witness those many churches and monuments everywhere erected to the memory of Christian martyrs, no less to the honour than advantage of those cities and countries, and in some sense to all mankind.

7. The sum of the discourse is, in the apostle's words, that "God chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, the weak to confound those that are mighty, the base things of the world, things most vilified and despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." These were the things, these the persons whom God sent upon this errand, to silence "the wise, the scribe, and the disputer of this world, and to make foolish the wisdom of this world." For though "the Jews required a sign, and the Greeks sought after wisdom, though the preaching a crucified Saviour was a scandal to the Jews, and foolishness to the learned Grecians, yet by this foolishness of preaching God was pleased to save them that believed:" and in the event made it appear, that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men;" that so the honour of all might entirely redound to himself: so the apostle concludes, "that no flesh should glory in his presence, but that he that glorieth, should glory in the Lord."

We are not informed by the spiritual records, that St. Peter was of any particular sect; but we learn, that Andrew his brother was one of the most zealous followers of our Saviour: nor is it probable but that he, who was anxious to carry to his brother the earliest intelligence of the great Messiah, must be as anxious to introduce him to John the Baptist, the great forerunner of the Saviour of mankind. Peter's singular curiosity at the information that Christ would visit and converse with him, furnishes at least a collateral proof that the preaching and declarations of St. John had made a strong impression on his mind, and prepared him for the reception of his divine visitor.

Jesus paid not his first visit to the apostle till he was thirty years of age, and had been baptized by John in the river Jordan; where his commission, as a dispenser of the divine mercy, was most solemnly attested, and generally acknowledged. After the baptism of our Lord, he was, as some of our writers express it, "hurried into the wilderness;" where he remained forty days in a contest with the devil, and was finally victorious over that grand enemy of the human race.

Immediately thereon, he proceeded to Bethabara, beyond Jordan, where the apostle John was then employed in baptizing the converts to the Christian faith; and replying to certain Jews, who had been deputed by their brethren to inquire into the veracity of the reports respecting the expected Messiah, the great Redeemer of mankind. The apostle, with a veracity that marked his character, informed them of all he knew respecting the Redeemer of mankind; and in a short time acquainted his followers who he was; on which two of them followed the Author of their salvation, one of whom was Andrew, the brother of Peter.

Early in the morning of the following day, St. Andrew repaired to his brother, to inform him, that he had beheld the expected Messiah; and expressed himself with rapture on the delivery of the glad tidings so long expected, and so anxiously hoped for.

Peter,

Peter, who was of the number of those who had patiently waited for that redemption which had been expected, followed his brother to the place where Jesus was; and when they arrived, Christ gave evident testimony of his divinity, by calling Peter by his proper name, mentioning his family and relations, and acquainting him with the title by which he should soon be distinguished.

We learn not from sacred writ, whether the brothers constantly attended on our Saviour from this period: but it seems probable that they remained with him till they had received such instructions as might enable them to pursue their ministration of divine knowledge, and then returned to their employment as fishermen.

By this time the Saviour of mankind had exercised his holy and benevolent function for more than twelve months; when the frequency of his preaching, and the constant success of his miracles, so greatly advanced his fame throughout Judæa, that immense numbers of people repaired to hear him preach, and to be witnesses of the wonderful acts which he performed.

The crowds of people that perpetually gathered around our Saviour became so troublesome, that he was induced to make frequent retreats to places of solitude. On one of these occasions, on the borders of the Galilean sea, the people learning where he was, ran to him in multitudes; on which, to avoid the throng, he went into a boat belonging to Peter, who had been fishing all night with others of his profession, and was now on shore, drying his nets. Jesus requested Peter to put off his boat from the land, that he might conveniently instruct the people, who by this time had assembled in amazing crowds.

In this situation Christ expounded the will of God; and, having finished his discourse, he resolved to exhibit an instance of his divine power; and therefore directed Peter to row from the shore, and throw his net into the water. The apostle replied, that they had not met with any success during the night, and that little was then to be expected: but that he would obey the commands of his Master. He then cast in his net, and drew up such a miraculous draught of fishes, that he fell at the feet of Christ in astonishment and admiration, and confessed himself unworthy of the presence of the Son of God.

Christ kindly compassionated his distress, and told him, that the miracle was wrought for the confirmation of his faith; and that thenceforth he should be a "fisher of men." Peter and his associates now became the constant disciples and companions of Christ; comporting themselves as became true profelytes to the gospel dispensation.

Not long after this, Christ and his disciples repaired to Capernaum, where the mother of Peter's wife being in a violent fever, Jesus took her by the hand, and, by his divine power, immediately restored her to her former health: at once, giving the most indisputable proof of his heavenly influence and supreme authority.

Having deemed it expedient to select, from among the number of his followers, some persons who should be the constant witnesses of his miracles and gospel, and who might be successfully employed in promoting the Christian religion after his ascension into the regions of his heavenly Father, our great Redeemer privately retired in the evening to a solitary mountain, where he employed the whole night in fervently supplicating the Almighty to render him successful in the great and important undertaking in which he had engaged for effecting the salvation of mankind.

Having elected the twelve apostles, he appointed them to be the constant attendants on his person; and he afterwards invested them with the power of working miracles, and commanded them to travel into various parts of Judæa, that the precepts of his Gospel might be disseminated with the greater rapidity and success. In their enumeration of the apostles, the evangelists concur in naming St. Peter first: but we are not hence to infer, that he was invested with any personal prerogative over his brethren; for nothing of this kind is intimated in the scriptures; and besides, St. Paul expressly says, that he himself was not inferior to any one of the apostles.

Soon after the appointment of the apostles, our Lord, attended by Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, proceeded to the house of Jairus, one of the rulers of the synagogue, in order to restore the health of his daughter, who then lay at the point of death. They were met by one of the domestics of Jairus, who informed them, that the damsel was dead, and

and that therefore the attendance of Jesus would be unnecessary: but our compassionate Redeemer bid the afflicted father not despair, assuring him at the same time, that if he had faith, his daughter should yet be perfectly restored. Peter accompanied our Lord to the house of Jairus, whose daughter, at his command, was immediately restored to life and perfect health.

We have no farther account of this apostle in particular, till the night after our Saviour had miraculously fed the multitude in the wilderness. Jesus ordered his disciples to embark and cross the lake, saying, he would himself dismiss the multitude. A terrible storm arising, they were thrown into the utmost consternation, momentarily expecting that they should fall victims to the fury of the contending elements. While in this situation, they perceived their Master walking on the surface of the boisterous billows; but supposing him to be an apparition, their terror was increased to an unspeakable degree. But approaching the vessel, our Saviour dispelled their fears, by assuring them, that their terror was without cause, and that he would protect them from every evil. Peter, who was ever remarkable for a bold and forward disposition, requested that his Master would permit him to walk to him; and upon obtaining leave, he descended from the vessel, and walked upon the waves to meet the Saviour of mankind. The storm now increasing, Peter was much terrified, and his faith declining, he sunk in the water. Upon his calling upon his Master for assistance, the blessed Jesus stretched forth his hand, and raised him to the surface of the water; at the same time, however, gently reproving him in the following manner: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" No sooner had the blessed Jesus entered the vessel, than the winds and waves subsided, and the ship was at the place of destination. This stupendous miracle could not fail of exciting the astonishment of the disciples, and of convincing them of the divinity of the mission of Jesus, before whom they prostrated themselves, exclaiming, "Of a truth, thou art the Son of God."

On the following day, our Saviour repaired to the synagogue of Capernaum, and upon his representing his kingdom to be intirely spiritual, many of his auditors deserted him; and upon this occasion our Lord questioning his disciples, if they would leave him also, Peter asked of Jesus, whither he and his brethren should go? saying, that, since he had the words of eternal life, where else could they apply for the purpose of securing their salvation but to him, who is "the way, the truth, and the life?"

The people of Judæa, who had with astonishment beheld the miracles of Jesus, entertained a variety of conjectures concerning him. Of this our Lord was by no means ignorant: but being willing to hear what account his disciples would give of the different opinions of the multitude, he questioned them on the subject. They replied, that some believed him to be John the baptist risen from the dead, some that he was Elias, and others that he was Jeremiah, or one of the ancient prophets. In consequence of this full and comprehensive declaration of Peter, who said, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," our Saviour said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jonah; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." By these words our Lord implied, the faith which Peter acknowledged, was not founded upon the testimony of man, but upon that knowledge which the Almighty had appointed him to reveal to mankind. I therefore say, continued our Saviour, "that thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." As thy name signifies a rock, so shall thy faith be, as a rock, firm and immoveable: my church shall be so steadfastly established upon the faith thou hast professed, that it shall not yield to the assaults either of men or devils.

The disciples had no conception that Christ was to suffer death for the sins of mankind, but believed that the Messiah would establish an earthly sovereignty, subdue all nations of the earth to his dominion by the terrors of war, and reign to eternity; and therefore, when our Lord predicted the indignities which he was to experience during the course of his ministry, and the cruel and disgraceful death he was to suffer by the sentence of the Sanhedrim, Peter interrupted him, saying, "Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee." But our compassionate Redeemer, valuing the redemption of mankind greatly above his own personal safety, severely rebuked his apostle for this expression; saying,

"Get

"Get thou behind me, Satan, thou art an offence to me." Thy pernicious counsel, which opposes the great design for which I quitted the blessed regions of my heavenly Father, is offensive to me; because it proves, that thou, "favourest not the things of God, but those that be of men."

When our great Redeemer was about to receive a specimen of his future glorification, he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, to the summit of a lofty mountain, which was the scene of our blessed Saviour's transfiguration. From his face was diffused the radiancy of heaven, and beams of light issued from his garments. This event was a sensible representation of that state, when the "just shall walk in white robes," and "shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." During this wonderful scene, the prophets Moses and Elias appeared in all the splendor of a state of glorification, and conversed with Jesus on the subject of the sufferings and death he was shortly to undergo, and his ascension into the regions of ineffable and eternal bliss.

In the mean time, Peter and his two brethren fell asleep: but awakening, they were astonished on beholding their Master surrounded by the glory of heaven, and engaged in conversation with his celestial visitants. They remained silent till the two prophets appeared to be preparing for departure, when Peter, in ecstasy, declared, that his brethren and himself were sensible of the most exalted delight, in being witnesses to this glorious spectacle: at the same time requesting permission to erect three tabernacles, one for their Master, one for Moses, and another for Elias: but while he was speaking, a bright cloud overspread the two heavenly ambassadors, and a voice from heaven was heard to proclaim, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Hereupon the apostles were seized with the utmost consternation, and prostrated themselves upon the earth: but our Saviour bid them dismiss their fears, and look up with confidence; they obeyed, but saw only their Master, the celestial ambassadors having ascended into the regions of bliss during their state of prostration.

After the glorification of Jesus, he travelled into Galilee, and upon his return to Capernaum, the tax-gatherers applied to Peter, desiring to be informed, whether his Master was willing to pay the usual tribute? This demand being communicated to Jesus, he was unwilling to violate an established custom, and therefore wrought a miracle in order to enable Peter to pay the tribute for himself and his Master.

Our Saviour was now to repair to Jerusalem; and therefore he commanded Peter and John to fetch him an ass, that he might enter the city in the manner he had predicted.

Having visited Jerusalem, Jesus repaired to Bethany, from whence he dispatched Peter and John to make preparations for celebrating the passover. These orders being obeyed, our Lord, accompanied by his apostles, repaired to the house where preparations had been made for their reception, and seated themselves at table. Jesus, who was accustomed to teach by example as well as precept, presently arose from his seat, and washed the feet of some of his disciples, thereby instructing them in the duties of humility and brotherly love. When our Saviour came to perform this ceremony to St. Peter, he objected to his Master's condescending to so servile an office, saying, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Hereupon our blessed Saviour signified, that the washing was purely mystical, and represented the remission of sins, and the purifying virtue of the Spirit of the most high God, which was to be diffused amongst all sincere Christians. This explanation removed the scruples of Peter, who exclaimed, "Lord, wash not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Wash me in every part, rather than I should lose any portion of thy blessing.

Having given his disciples this example of humility, the blessed Jesus mentioned his approaching sufferings, and that he should be betrayed into the power of his enemies by his apostles. The eleven apostles were greatly affected by this declaration; and Peter made signs to John, who was then reclining on the bosom of his Saviour, to inquire of his Master, which of the twelve could be capable of so abominable an iniquity as that he had mentioned? In compliance with this request, our Lord signified that Judas Iscariot was the man to whom he alluded.

Upon the institution of the sacramental supper, our Saviour informed his disciples, that he was preparing to leave them, and that they could not obtain admittance where he was going.

Not comprehending our Saviour's meaning, Peter asked, to what place he was going? Jesus answered, that he was going to a place where Peter would not be able to gain immediate admittance, but the time would arrive when he should follow; thus alluding to the martyrdom he was to suffer for his Master's religion. Hereupon Peter said, that he was willing to follow him, even at the hazard of his life. This confidence was by no means agreeable to the meek and humble Jesus, who reprov'd his disciple, saying, that notwithstanding what he had promised, his resolutions were so weakly founded, that before the cock should be twice heard to crow, he would three times deny his Master.

The paschal supper being concluded, they sung an hymn, and then departed to the mount of Olives: where Jesus again reminded them of the sufferings he was to endure, whereby they would all be offended. Upon this, Peter said, that "though all men should be offended because of him, yet he would never be offended." Thus we see, that a forward and intemperate zeal will transport even good men into vanity and presumption. Peter questions the fidelity of others, but reposes the firmest confidence in his own fortitude, although his Master had but a very short time before rebuked him for the error which he, on this occasion, repeated. The confidence of Peter inspired his brethren with courage; and therefore they declared, that under all these circumstances, and in all situations, they would faithfully maintain their allegiance to their Master.

They now repaired to the garden of Gethsemane, and leaving his eight apostles near the entrance, our Saviour, accompanied by Peter, James, and John, retired to a solitary spot, which was to be the scene of our great Redeemer's agony. Our Lord told his select disciples, that "his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" and indeed, he experienced a most violent conflict between the spirit and the flesh; his human nature, like that of other men, being extremely averse to yield to the stroke of death. During the agony of our Lord, his disciples slept; and, awakening them, he addressed himself to Peter, saying, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." What endearing kindness, what unbounded generosity, what incomparable sweetness, did our Saviour display on this occasion! He pronounced the most mild and charitable censure upon the inattention of his disciples. Though repeatedly awakened from their sleep, and apprised of the melancholy scene that was shortly to ensue, still they disregarded the admonitions of their Master, who recommended them to pray, lest they should yield to temptation: but so far from severely upbraiding them on account of their disobedience, he considered their having indulged the desire of repose, as the consequence of the infirmities of their nature; thereby instructing them in the useful lesson, of putting the most favourable construction on the actions of their fellow-creatures.

While our Saviour was discoursing to his apostles, the traitor Judas, followed by a band of soldiers, came into the garden; and Judas having saluted Jesus, the soldiers rushed upon, and seized him. Hereupon Peter drew his sword, and struck off the right ear of the high-priest's servant. Our Lord rebuked the rashness of Peter, and intreated that the soldiers would forbear till he should have healed the wound.

The period was now arrived, when the boasted fidelity of the apostles was to be put to a severe trial. They beheld their Master in the power of a band of armed men, and therefore their duty required them to exert their utmost efforts for alleviating his sufferings:—but, alas! instead of administering comfort, and of affording assistance to their Master, they sought to secure their safety by flight.

Having bound our Saviour with cords, the soldiers conducted him to the house of Anas, and from thence to the palace of Caiaphas the high-priest, where the members of the Sanhedrim had assembled, with a preconcerted determination to pronounce upon him the sentence of condemnation, although no evidence of guilt should be adduced against him.

In the interim, Peter, who had, in company with the other disciples, deserted the blessed Jesus in his distress, recovered his spirits, and, being encouraged by St. John, he repaired in search of his Master, whom he followed at a distance to the palace of Caiaphas; where, however he was refused admittance. But through the interest of John, he was permitted to enter the hall, where the officers and domestic servants of the high-priest were collected about

about a fire. Here one of the female servants charged Peter with being one of the followers of Jesus; but this he positively denied, and presently after retired into the porch, where he heard the cock crow.

After this, he was accosted by another female domestic, who also accused him of being a disciple of Jesus of Nazareth; but, as before, he resolutely denied the charge, and even ratified his declaration with an oath.

About an hour after this, the kinsman of the servant whose ear Peter had smote off, insisted that he was the disciple of Christ, in company with whom he declared he had himself seen him in the garden of Gethsemane; adding also, that his pronunciation evidently proved him to be a Galilean. But Peter still denied the fact, and appealing to the Almighty, with solemn imprecations, declared, "that he knew not the man." This denial was no sooner uttered, than he again heard the cock crow. Hereupon Jesus turned towards Peter, and regarded him with such peculiar earnestness, as recalled to his recollection, that his Master had frequently predicted that he would basely deny him. Struck with a consciousness of his guilt, Peter retired from the palace of the high-priest, and "wept bitterly;" he sincerely lamented his infidelity, and his repeated aggravations of his sin.

From a variety of circumstances it appears, that after the crucifixion of our blessed Redeemer, Peter resided at Jerusalem, or at least in the neighbourhood of that city; for when Mary Magdalene returned from the sepulchre to inform the disciples that the stone was removed from the door, and that the body of Jesus was not to be found, Peter and John hastened towards the garden.

But this apostle did not remain long in suspense with respect to his Master, who appeared to him on the same day. Thus Peter was the first of the disciples who acknowledged the divinity of Christ, so was it reasonable that he should first behold him after his resurrection. By this act of condescension our compassionate Redeemer convinced Peter, that the crime he had committed was fully pardoned.

In a short time after, agreeable to the command of their Master, the apostle retired into Galilee; and we find that Peter, the two sons of Zebedee, and three other of the disciples, returned to their former occupation of fishing in the lake of Gennesareth. Early one morning, when these people were following their usual employment, they perceived a grave person on the shore, who asked them, if they had any provisions; and upon their answering in the negative, he bid them cast their net on the right side of the ship, and their labour would be amply rewarded. They complied with his directions, and immediately inclosed so prodigious a quantity of fish, that it was not without the utmost difficulty that they were able to bring them on shore. This remarkable success occasioned the apostles to look upon each other with astonishment; and at length John observed to Peter, that the person, to whose advice they were indebted for this wonderful draught, could be no other than their great Lord and Master. Peter had no sooner heard this, than he leaped into the sea, and swam to shore, so impatient was he to acknowledge his Master. Thomas, Nathaniel, James, and John, brought the vessel deeply laden with fish to land, and having disembarked, they perceived a fire already burning, and fish broiling thereon. Although there was fish on the fire, our Lord commanded them to bring some of those they had taken in the net, and lay them on the fire for their repast. Jesus presented to them both fish and bread, and also partook of the meal.

The repast being concluded, our Saviour, addressing himself to Peter, asked, whether his love of him exceeded that of the other disciples. Peter, who had been taught humility by fatal experience, replied, "Lord, thou knowest, notwithstanding my former denial of thee, which proceeded not from my judgment, but my fears, that thou art the object of my love and veneration." Our Lord repeated his question twice; it being proper that he who had thrice denied his Master, should make compensation for his failings by a threefold acknowledgment of his Saviour. To each of the confessions of Peter, our Lord added, "Feed my sheep;" by which words, he enjoined his apostle to exert his utmost endeavours for reclaiming mankind from their iniquities, and for propagating his Gospel.

The blessed Jesus was now pleased to intimate to Peter the fate that he was to experience, saying,

faying, that in his youth he girt himself, lived at his pleasure, and went where-ever his inclination dictated; but when old age should arrive, others would gird and bind him, and lead him where he was averse to go: thus signifying, as the evangelist informs us, "by what death he should glorify God." Peter repined not upon learning that he was to encounter great misfortunes, and he was willing that his confession should be as public as his Master; hoping, that he might by that means evidence his faith in, and love to him. Peter now asked our Saviour, what would become of his beloved disciple John? In reply to this question, Jesus said, "It doth not concern thee to learn the events which I shall dispose concerning him: he shall not die, till he shall have been witness to the destruction of the Jewish nation."

A few days after this, our blessed Redeemer summoned his disciples to mount Olivet; and there enjoined them to remain at Jerusalem, till, in compliance with his promise, he should occasion the Holy Spirit to descend upon them, that they might be fully qualified for the discharge of the ministerial function, into which he had already inaugurated them. Having spoken to this effect, our blessed Saviour bestowed upon them his solemn benediction, "and ascended up to heaven, where he sitteth on the right hand of God."

Notwithstanding they were deprived of the presence of their master, the apostles were indefatigable in the discharge of the important commission with which he had invested them. Upon their return to Jerusalem, the first object that claimed their attention, was, to supply that vacancy in their original number, which had happened in consequence of the apostasy of Judas Iscariot.

In a full congregation of the disciples of Jesus, who assembled in an upper apartment of a house belonging to one of the members of the church of Christ, Peter, as president of the meeting, observed, that Jesus had selected twelve persons for the purpose of propagating his Gospel; but as the number had decreased through the treachery of Judas, it appeared expedient that the office which had been vacated in consequence of his apostasy should be supplied. The whole assembly assented to this proposition; and "they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias." And they prayed, and said, "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part in this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles," Acts i. 23, &c.

Ten days after the ascension of the blessed Jesus, and at the time of celebrating the feast of Pentecost, the apostles and many other pious Christians, who from the time of the ascension had constantly employed themselves in solemn devotional exercises, were assembled at their usual place of worship, when they were surprised by a loud wind, with which came "cloven* tongues, as it were of fire, and sat upon each of them." Perhaps a fiery vapour or exhalation, formed by the divine power into the figure of a man's tongue, divided at the tip, was placed upon the head of each of the apostles, representing the gifts which the Almighty at that time bestowed upon them by the effusion of the Holy Spirit. They were now inspired by the Holy Ghost, and immediately enabled to speak divers languages to which they had been hitherto entire strangers, and were, of consequence, qualified to preach the wonderful works of God to the inhabitants of the various quarters of the globe.

The rumour of this miracle was soon dispersed throughout Jerusalem, where † immense numbers of people had assembled on occasion of the feast; and among these were men of every nation under heaven: "Parthians, Medes, Elamites, the dwellers in Mesopotamia

* Cloven, to denote the variety of languages which the apostles would be enabled to understand and speak; and fire, to represent their zeal in proclaiming the Gospel; as also that divine light which they were to impart to others, and that purity and holiness wherewith they were to be endued.

† St. Luke enumerates fifteen sorts of strangers, who, upon the report of this miraculous power, resorted to the assembly of the Christians, and were astonished to hear their several languages spoken with the utmost fluency and precision, by uneducated natives of Galilee.

and Judæa, Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, the parts of Lybia and Cyrene."

The wonderful faculty thus bestowed upon the apostles, of conversing in various languages, had different effects upon the minds of the people; some ascribing their gift of speech to a supernatural power, and others believing, in consequence of the slanderous insinuations of the scribes and Pharisees, that what the apostles had uttered was the result of having drank intemperately of new wine; and that their discourses were fallacious, confused, and incoherent.

To rescue his brethren and himself from this invidious accusation, Peter arose, and said, that the slanderous charge of intoxication was equally groundless and unreasonable; for it then being only about nine o'clock in the forenoon, it could scarcely be supposed that they had tasted wine, or any other inflammatory liquor; especially since, according to the established usage in the celebration of the feast of the Pentecost, the people received no kind of refreshment at so early an hour. He said, that these extraordinary and miraculous effects were produced by an effusion of the Holy Spirit, according to a prediction of the prophet Joel. This miracle, said the apostle, is an incontestable proof, that Jesus is the true begotten Son of God; for though, by their malicious and bloody contrivances, they had put him to death, yet he was ascended into heaven, and seated at the right hand of the almighty Father, agreeable to what had been foretold of him by David; who had said, "that he should sit at the right hand of God, and his enemies be made his footstool." Hence then, said he, it behoves the whole house of Israel to believe, that Jesus of Nazareth, whom you have barbarously crucified, is the true Messiah, appointed by the Almighty to effect the redemption of mankind, and establish the Christian church.

This was the first public discourse of Peter; and it so deeply impressed the minds of his auditors, that, fearing they had incurred the displeasure of the Almighty, they inquired what means they ought to pursue for obtaining pardon: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Upon this, Peter informed them, that the only means of having their sins done away, and of obtaining the gift of the Holy Spirit, would be by sincere repentance, and baptism in the name of the holy Jesus. Upon these conditions, he said, the promises of the new covenant, ratified by the death of the Son of God, would be fulfilled to them, to their posterity, and to all those who should become converts to the Gospel of Christ.

This endearing and persuasive address of St. Peter was productive of the most salutary effects, for on this occasion three thousand converts were made to the Christian religion; and these people received the sacrament, and ever after continued in the doctrine and fellowship of the apostles. Thus was accomplished that prophecy of our Saviour, which expressed, that St. Peter should become "a fisher of men."

A short time after the above wonderful conversion, and during the continuance of the feast of Pentecost, Peter and John went to the temple about three o'clock in the afternoon, the time of evening prayers, and beheld a man, who had been a cripple from his birth, lying at the gate, and begging alms. The sight of this miserable object excited their compassion; and Peter said, that though it was not in his power to afford him pecuniary relief, yet he was able to confer a gift of infinitely higher importance; for to him the Lord had given power of bestowing health and life, and he was disposed to afford him relief. Then taking the man, who was about forty years of age, by the hand, he commanded him, "in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, to rise up and walk." The diseased members immediately performed their proper functions, and the man accompanied the apostles into the temple, at the same time glorifying the name of God.

The people were filled with admiration, upon beholding the free exercise of the beggar's limbs; and being informed of the manner in which this wonderful cure had been wrought, they repaired into Solomon's porch, to satisfy their curiosity, by beholding a man possessed of the extraordinary power which Peter had manifested.

Peter availed himself of this opportunity to magnify the name of our holy Redeemer; and addressing himself to the multitude, he said, they were not to suppose that this surprising cure had been performed merely by the force of their own power; for it had been wrought in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and by the power of that just and holy person

whom they had barbarously crucified. Though they had put him to death, he was risen from the grave, and ascended to heaven, there to remain till the great and tremendous day of general restitution. But notwithstanding the enormity of their sins, the apostle bid them not to despair of obtaining forgiveness: which would most assuredly be extended to them, provided they sincerely repented of all their sins, but particularly of the shocking cruelty they had perpetrated upon the only Son of God. He said, that it behoved them to reflect, that they were the peculiar persons to whom the gracious promises of salvation were primarily given; and that since they were the men to whom the Almighty had sent his only Son to "turn them away from their iniquities," they were bound, by the obligations of duty and gratitude, to prove themselves not unworthy the tenderness and compassion that had been extended to them; which they could do no otherwise, than by being humbled under a consciousness of their sins, and being made truly penitent. If they were endued with godly sorrow for their sins, and enabled heartily to embrace the doctrine of Christ, the apostle assured them, that they would be intitled to the full enjoyment of the blessings of eternity: but that, on the contrary, if they persevered in their obstinate incredulity, they would inevitably become the objects of the divine vengeance. This discourse had, through divine grace, so happy an effect upon the minds of the multitude, that * in the course of the day whereon it was pronounced five thousand converts were persuaded to embrace the Gospel of Christ.

This amazing success of the Christian doctrine could not fail of inflaming the jealousy of the rulers of Israel: and the chief-priests and Sadducees repaired to the Roman governor, and represented, that the vast number of people who were assembled, and the preaching of the apostles, threatened to promote a rebellion. In consequence of this information, the centurion who had the command of the garrison stationed in Fort Antonia, which was built to overlook the temple on the north side, led forth a band of soldiers, who seized the apostles, and conducted them to prison. On the following day, they were brought for examination before the Jewish Sanhedrim: but the pretence of seditious practices was waved, because evidently groundless; and the several charges were at length resolved into the single question, "By what power and authority had the lame man been cured?" To this question, Peter resolutely replied, "Be it known unto you, and all the descendants of Jacob, that the miracle wrought in the cure of the cripple, was performed in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom you barbarously crucified, and whom the Almighty has rescued from the power of death. This Jesus is alluded to by the prophet, who mentions him under the similitude of a stone; which stone, you, like skilful builders, have rejected: but God had made him the head of the corner; and through his merits and mediation alone the children of sinful men are to expect salvation."

The undaunted spirit which the apostles displayed on this occasion raised the wonder of the whole court, who, how strongly soever inclined, did not presume to dispute the existence of a miracle, which had been wrought in the presence of so great a multitude of people. But the court commanded the apostles to withdraw, while they deliberated on the measures to be pursued against them. Not being in the possession of evidence which could, even by the most forced and uncandid construction, fix the imputation of guilt upon them, the Sanhedrim determined to attempt justifying themselves in the opinion of the people, by treating the apostles with undeserved severity, thereby aggravating their former cruelty towards the blessed Jesus. They therefore, agreed to prohibit them from continuing to preach in the name of Jesus.

The apostles were again ordered into the court, and acquainted with the resolution of the council. Hereupon they said, that, having received a commission from heaven, they were bound by the strongest of all obligations to proclaim the Gospel of Christ; and therefore they would appeal to themselves, whether it was not their duty to "obey God, rather than man." This was a fair appeal to the consciences of their very judges: but, instead of be-

* Thus is the above passage commonly understood: but there is room for a different interpretation, viz. that the whole number of believers in the Gospel of Christ, amounted to about five thousand persons.

ing satisfied, the rulers were inclined to proceed to acts of the most extreme severity; and this disposition they would certainly have indulged, had not their malice been restrained by the high veneration which the people entertained for the apostles, whom the council dismissed, after having repeated their menaces with additional vehemence.

Being thus restored to liberty, Peter and John returned to their brethren, and informed them of the treatment they had experienced from the Jewish magistrates. Upon this, they joined in prayer to the Lord, that he would be graciously pleased to grant them sufficient courage and fortitude, firmly to establish the religion of their crucified Saviour. Having uttered these pious supplications, God was pleased to signify to them that their prayers were heard. The house wherein they were assembled, was shaken by a mighty wind, as it had been during the feast of Pentecost; and they immediately found themselves replenished with fresh measures of the Holy Ghost, whereby they were inspired with power and resolution to proceed in preaching the Gospel of Christ, and the doctrine of his resurrection, in despite of all the menaces of the Jewish rulers.

Among the various good effects resulting from the evangelical preaching, was a spirit of unbounded love and benevolence, with which the true believers were inspired. Many of the converts to the Christian doctrine were in circumstances of indigence: but such was the liberality of the rich, that they cheerfully relieved their necessities, selling their estates, and delivering the produce to the apostles, that they might distribute in proportion to the circumstances of such of their brethren as had occasion for pecuniary assistance. Barnabas particularly distinguished himself by his benevolent disposition; for he disposed of a valuable estate in Cyprus, and delivered the produce to the apostles, to be disposed of in such charitable uses as their discretion should dictate.

But even in these primitive times of christianity, hypocrisy was not unknown among the professors of religion. Of this a singular instance was afforded in the case of Ananias, and his wife Sapphira. Ambitious of emulating the example of many pious people, who had consecrated their possessions to the honour of God, and the necessities of the church, having sold their estate, for the purpose of an ostentatious display of charity, they delivered only a part of the produce to the apostles.

When Ananias came to pay the money into the hands of Peter, that apostle severely rebuked him on the score of his hypocrisy, asking him, what atonement it was possible for him to make, for having been guilty of so enormous a crime, as attempting to commit an imposition upon the Holy Ghost? So greatly was Ananias affected by the dreadful apprehension of becoming an object of the divine vengeance, that he fell upon the earth, and instantly expired: "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lye to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lyed unto men, but unto God. And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost. And great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him." Acts v. 1, &c.

About three hours after the death of Ananias, his wife Sapphira came to St. Peter, and as she had conspired with her husband in the abominable crime for which he had lost his life, the apostle upbraided her with her guilt; saying, that since she had shared in his iniquity, it was but just that she should be subjected to a similar punishment. She was smitten by the hand of Omnipotence, and fell dead upon the ground. The body of Sapphira was taken away by the persons who had removed that of her husband, and they were buried in one grave. "And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straitway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost. And the young men came in,

in, and found her dead, and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things." Acts v. 7, &c.

The guilt of these people was unquestionably very great: but yet the punishment inflicted upon them was not so much on account of their sin, as that a signal example might be afforded, for deterring others from falsifying their religious resolutions and purposes, and for preventing their covetousness and avarice from seducing them into the practice of dissimulation and hypocrisy to God omniscient, from whose knowledge no motion of the heart can be concealed.

This severe infliction, which was certainly intended to inspire the people with a proper idea of the authority of the apostles, had the intended effect; for from henceforward the multitude feared their power, and venerated their persons. It was, however, but on very extraordinary occasions that the apostles proceeded to acts of great severity; but, on the contrary, they were accustomed to exert their power in works of mercy and beneficence towards the sons and daughters of affliction. They cast out devils, and perfectly cured every kind of disease. The Almighty was pleased to bestow such sanative virtue upon these holy men, that a single touch, or a word from either of them, was sufficient to remove any bodily disease or infirmity, how desperate soever, or of whatever long continuance. The sick were laid upon beds and couches in the streets; and those afflicted persons, over whom the very shadow of St. Peter passed, were instantly cured of their infirmities. These miracles caused the apostles to be held in great veneration, and procured a vast number of converts to the Christian religion.

The great influence which the apostles obtained over the minds of the multitude, and the extraordinary and continually increasing success of the Gospel, proved highly offensive to the members of the Sanhedrim; who were extremely exasperated, upon finding that their prohibition was intirely disregarded, and that the cause of christianity became daily more firmly established. They caused, therefore, these holy men to be apprehended, and even proceeded so far as to commit them to the common prison. But the Almighty, to prove that no human power was capable of interrupting divine purposes and decrees, sent his angel to them in the night to restore them to freedom, and command them to proceed in the duties of their holy ministration. In obedience to the angel's injunction, they repaired to the temple early on the following morning, and there publicly instructed the people in the means of providing for their eternal salvation.

Ignorant of the miraculous deliverance of their prisoners, the council assembled in the morning, and dispatched some of their officers to bring the apostles before them for examination. Upon the return of these officers, they made a report to the council, purporting that, although the prisoners were not to be found, there appeared no means by which it was possible they could have effected their escape; for when they visited the prison the doors were fast, and the keepers were on guard.

This extraordinary circumstance greatly alarmed the council, and suggested to them, that they had engaged in a business which might probably terminate to their disadvantage. Being informed, however, that the apostles were preaching in the temple, they dispatched thither the captain of the guard with a number of their own officers, with orders to bring the apostles before them for examination; but they cautioned their messengers against using compulsive measures, lest the populace should thereby be provoked to acts of fury and outrage.

The holy apostles being conducted before the Sanhedrim, Caiaphas censured them for having presumed to preach the Gospel, after the prohibition that had been laid upon them. 'Your duty to this assembly, which is composed of the rulers of the people,' said the high-priest, 'enjoins you to an implicit acquiescence in our decrees: but, instead of yielding to our commands, you have inflamed the minds of the people, by representing us as murderers of the Messiah; and hence it appears, that your design is to provoke the multitude to avenge themselves upon us for having put him to death.' In reply, Peter, in the name of his brethren and himself, said, that although obedience was due to the governors of the people, obligations of an infinitely higher nature were due to the Almighty, an exact conformity to whose will was to supersede every other consideration; and therefore, in despite

spite of all opposition, they would persevere in proclaiming those great truths, which had been communicated to them by the immediate inspiration of heaven. So exasperated were the members of the Sanhedrim by the reply of Peter, that they formed a resolution of putting all the apostles to death; and this they would in all probability have carried into execution, but for the interference of Gamaliel, a grave and learned Pharisee, and a man of high reputation among the people.

The apostles being commanded to withdraw, this wise and prudent counsellor admonished his brethren to proceed with caution in the affair which was then under their consideration; reminding them, that divers factions had already been excited under the pretext of introducing new sects of religion, but these designs had all proved abortive without any opposition from that court. And he further declared, that it would, in his opinion, be prudent to decline all opposition to the preaching of the apostles; for since, if their doctrine was merely of human invention, it would necessarily fall into disrepute, and at length be lost in oblivion, without any measures pursued by the council for its suppression; but if their doctrine was what they so confidently asserted, and what they appeared so powerfully to justify by the performance of miracles, it would not only be ineffectual, but even impious, to attempt the suppression of the preaching of the disciples of the deceased Jesus, which, supposing them to be invested with a divine commission, would be sacrilegiously to oppose the works of the Almighty.

These reasonable expostulations were so far productive of their proper effect, that the council reversed their determination of putting the apostles to death, but sentenced them to be scourged, and admonished them to preach no more in the name of Jesus. Having submitted to the discipline of scourging, the apostles departed from the Sanhedrim, rejoicing that they were esteemed worthy to suffer reproach and disgrace in the cause of righteousness.

Although the speech of Gamaliel restrained the members of the Sanhedrim from directing the full force of their fury against the apostles, they still continued implacable enemies to the Gospel of Christ. Stephen, the proto-martyr, a man of singular wisdom and piety, engaged in a controversy with the enemies of the Gospel, whom he publicly confuted, by arguments founded on the divine truths of scripture. The victory obtained by Stephen so exasperated his enemies, that, under pretext of his having been guilty of blasphemy, they accused him before the Sanhedrim; and the charge, falsely exhibited against him, was supported by two corrupt witnesses. No formal sentence was pronounced against Stephen, but he was cruelly stoned to death by his malicious enemies.

After the death of Stephen, the Jews persecuted the disciples of our blessed Saviour with such unrelenting severity, that they were under the necessity of providing for their security, by retiring from Jerusalem into various parts of Judæa and Samaria, but a very inconsiderable number remaining with the apostles in the city.

In this dispersion, Philip the deacon retired to the city of Sebaste in Samaria, where he preached the Gospel, and confirmed his doctrine by casting out unclean spirits, and performing a great number of miraculous cures. In this city resided a man named Simon, who, by magical illusions, had greatly raised the admiration of the multitude, and particularly that of the lower classes of people, who believed him to be "the great power of God;" an appellation which he had blasphemously arrogated to himself, pretending to be the father and sovereign of the whole world.

The doctrine of Philip was attended with such remarkable success, that the reputation of Simon rapidly declined; and therefore he pretended to become a convert to christianity, and submitted to the ceremony of baptism; hoping that, by this stratagem, he should be able to discover the means by which Philip wrought those miracles which so greatly raised the admiration of the multitude.

The conversion of so great a concourse of people was no sooner known to the apostles, who still remained in Jerusalem, than they determined to send assistance to Philip. St. Peter and St. John accordingly hastened to Sebaste, in order to confer the Holy Spirit upon those who had embraced christianity; for that privilege was peculiar to the apostles, and Philip was only a deacon.

Peter and John having prayed for, and laid their hands upon the converts, they received the Holy Spirit: and Simon observing the wonderful effects produced by the imposition of the hands of the apostles, became extremely desirous of attaining to the power of exercising the same privilege. He therefore offered the apostles a sum of money, on condition that they would invest him with the power of giving the Holy Ghost to those on whom he should lay his hands. Knowing and abominating the insincerity and wickedness of this man, Peter rejected his proposal with indignation; and admonished him to repentance, as the only means of securing himself from everlasting torments. What St. Peter had said, greatly alarmed Simon, who being apprehensive that he, like Ananias and Sapphira, should be made a terrible example of the guilt of hypocrisy, solicited the apostles, to pray in his behalf, that the judgments due to his crimes might be averted: but the insincerity of the repentance of this man will appear hereafter.

Having remained some time in Samaria, St. Peter and St. John returned to Jerusalem, proclaiming the divine truths of the Gospel in all the towns and villages through which they passed.

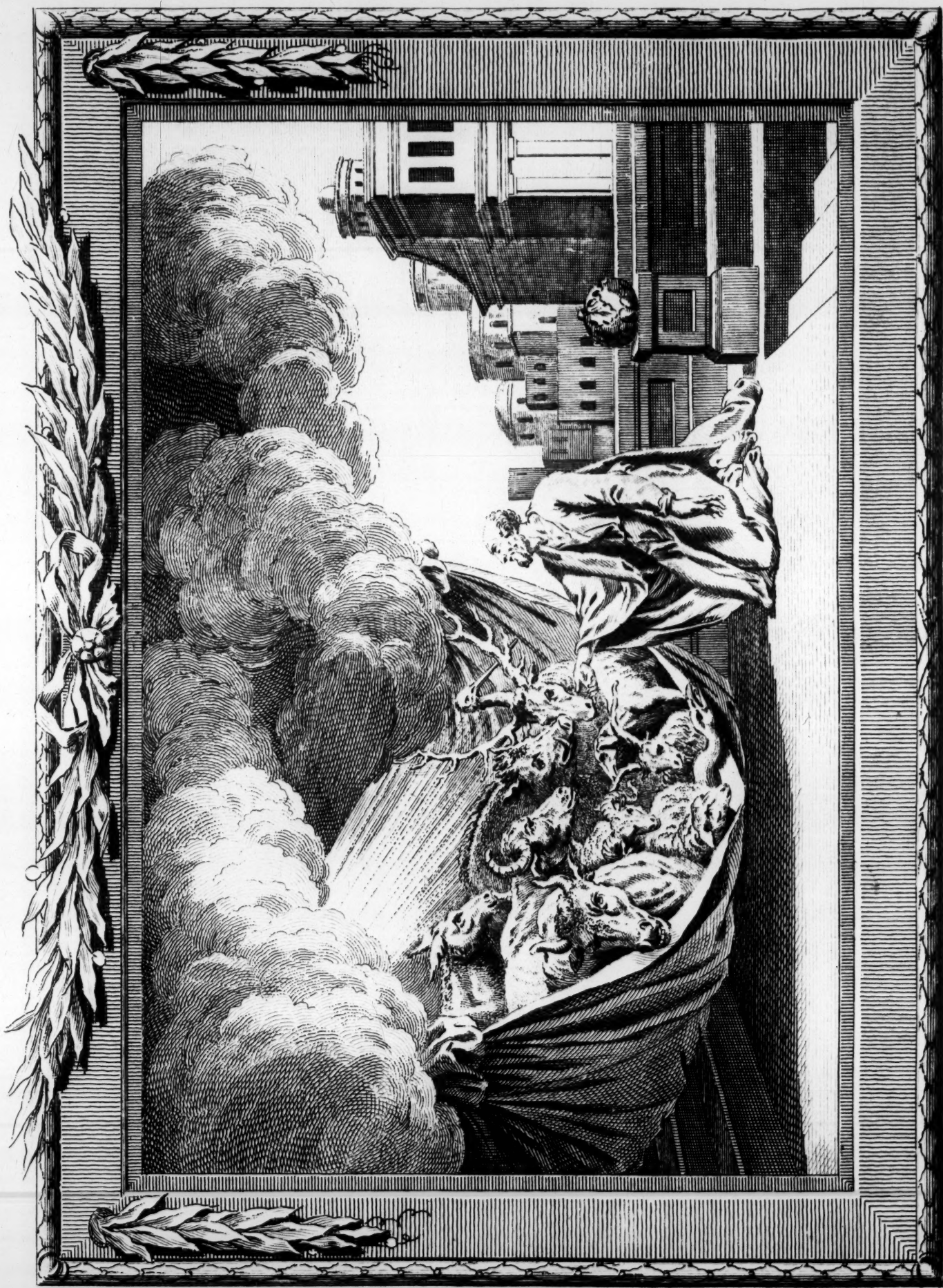
The violence of the persecution against the Christian church now subsided; and during this period of tranquillity, peace, and security, St. Peter undertook a general visitation of those churches which had been established by the disciples whom the persecution had dispersed. Upon the arrival of this apostle at Lydda, a village in the tribe of Ephraim, he performed a miraculous cure upon Æneas, who had been so dreadfully afflicted with the palsy for eight years, as to be confined to his bed during the whole period. The fame of this miracle was rapidly spread throughout the adjacent country, and it served to impress great numbers of people with a belief in the Gospel of the Son of God.

During the residence of St. Peter at Lydda, a pious woman, named Tabitha, who in the Greek language was called Dorcas, died at Joppa, a sea-port town about six miles from Lydda. This woman had been long highly celebrated for her universal benevolence, and particularly for her extensive charity to the poor, great numbers of whom she constantly clothed and supported. The death of this woman was universally lamented; and the people of Joppa having heard that Peter had restored Æneas to health, merely by commanding him, in the name of Jesus, to rise and walk, and likewise that he had performed divers other stupendous miracles, they dispatched two messengers to solicit his attendance.

Peter, upon his arrival, was introduced to the apartment where the deceased lay dressed in funeral attire, and surrounded by those weeping widows, and other persons, who had been the objects of her benevolence. The mourners dared not presume to request that Peter would restore the deceased to life; but their lamentations sufficiently indicated their desire. Having caused the mourners to leave the apartment, Peter turned towards the body of the deceased, and addressing himself in prayer to the Almighty, he commanded the dead woman to arise; immediately after which he took her by the hand, and presented her in perfect health to her friends. This miracle confirmed the faith of a great number of persons newly converted to the Gospel of Christ, and occasioned many others to embrace christianity. Peter remained a considerable time in the town of Joppa, residing in the house of a man named Simon, who was by profession a tanner. During the abode of Peter in this town, our Saviour was pleased to fulfil his promise of giving him the keys of the kingdom of heaven, by making him the instrument of receiving the Gentiles into his church.

While this apostle was one day offering up his prayers to heaven, he found himself hungry, and called for meat to satisfy his appetite. While the food was preparing, he fell into a trance, during which a large sheet was let down from heaven, containing a variety of creatures, both clean and unclean; and, at the same time, a voice from heaven was heard to proclaim, "Arise, Peter, kill and eat." The apostle, yet tenacious of the Mosaic institutions, said that he could not, consistently with the dictates of his conscience, comply; adding, that he had never eaten any common or unclean food. Upon this, the voice reproved him for his refusal, saying, that what God had cleansed, was not to be esteemed common or unclean. This was done thrice, after which the vision disappeared.

Upon awaking, Peter was greatly perplexed, being unable to divine the meaning of this extraordinary



PETER'S VISION.



extraordinary vision. While the apostle was ruminating upon the symbolical representation, which was intended to instruct him, that the Almighty intended to employ him in a new embassy, he was disturbed by a knocking at the gate. Three messengers being introduced to him, they informed him, that a Roman captain, named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian band, who was not a circumcised Jew, but a proselyte of the gate, requested his presence at Cæsarea.

On the following day Peter set out for Cæsarea; on his arrival there, Cornelius fell at his feet, according to the frequent practice of salutation in eastern countries; but Peter raised him from the ground, saying, the honour he intended him was due only to God.

Cornelius now informed Peter, that, four days before, an angel from heaven had informed him, that his prayers and alms had proved acceptable to the Almighty; and commanded him, at the same time, to send to Joppa for Simon Peter, who resided at the house of a tanner adjacent to the side of the sea, who would fully instruct him in the mysteries of salvation.

Peter was greatly astonished upon hearing this relation, but, upon comparing it with the vision which he had lately seen, he concluded that God had no longer maintained an exclusive kindness for the Jewish race, but, on the contrary, meant that people of all persuasions should be permitted to participate in the benefits of the new covenant.

Peter now expounded the great mysteries of salvation to the centurion, and a considerable number of other persons, among whom were many Jewish converts; and while he was speaking, the Holy Ghost descended upon those of his auditors whose hearts had been before purified by faith. The descent of the Spirit enabled them to magnify the name of God in various languages, to the great astonishment of the Jewish converts; who till now had maintained an opinion, that God would never bestow the graces of his Spirit upon the Gentiles. Observing the amazement of his auditors, Peter said, he knew no reason why those persons, who had received the Holy Ghost, should not be baptized; for their former errors could not reasonably be considered as an objection, since they were now converted to the cause of truth and righteousness; and he accordingly gave orders for their baptism.

The news of Peter having admitted Cornelius and others to a baptism with water, which is only a type of the baptism of the Spirit, being conveyed to Jerusalem, upon the return of Peter to that city, the apostles and other brethren severely censured him for his eating with the Gentiles, and living with them upon terms of familiarity and friendship. Peter defended himself against the accusations of his brethren, by representing, that the Almighty had not confined the grace of the Gospel to the people of any particular nation; and that all descriptions of men, provided that they regulated their lives by the rules of the religion of Jesus, were intitled to be admitted into the communion of the Gospel. The arguments of St. Peter so intirely removed the scruples of his brethren, that they applauded his conduct, and magnified the name of God, for the extensive benevolence and mercy he had displayed in affording the heathens an opportunity of providing for their eternal salvation by a sincere repentance, and an exact conformity to the divine precepts of the Gospel dispensation.

Having completed his visitation to the newly-established churches, Peter returned to Jerusalem, where, with unremitting industry, he continued to proclaim the blessed tidings of salvation. But he was interrupted in his course of righteousness by the cruel machinations of Herod Agrippa, who, with a view to ingratiate the favour of the Jews, had put the apostle James to death; and finding that act of barbarity highly acceptable to this obstinate people, he determined to render Peter an object of his savage barbarity; and in pursuance of this wicked design, he caused him to be apprehended, and cast into prison.

The Christian disciples fervently supplicated the Almighty for the deliverance of Peter; nor were their prayers disappointed. On the night preceding the day appointed for the execution of St. Peter, an angel of the Lord descended into the dungeon where he was confined, and at that time sleeping between two of the keepers of the prison. Having disengaged the apostle from his fetters, the heavenly messenger awakened him, commanding him:

him to gird on his garments and follow him. Peter supposed this to be merely a vision; till having passed the first and second guard, and also a strong iron gate, which opened to them by a divine power, and walked the length of a street into the city, he was so far recovered from his consternation, as to be persuaded that the whole was a matter of reality; and he praised God for having rescued him from the power of Herod, and from the vengeance which the Jews had meditated against him.

Repairing to the house where a great number of Christians had assembled to pray for his deliverance, Peter knocked at the door; and the servant maid, hearing his voice, returned to inform those within, that the apostle was waiting. This information they considered as the mere effect of fancy; but as the woman persisted in her assertion, they supposed that the voice she had heard proceeded from the angel of Peter, or some messenger sent to them from the courts of heaven. But, upon the door being opened, they were convinced of their error: and Peter briefly related to them the manner in which he had been rescued from the power of his oppressors; and, after requesting that they would inform his brethren of his deliverance, the apostle retired.

Herod being informed, on the following morning, that the apostle had effected his escape, he was exasperated to the most extravagant degree of rage, and commanded those who had been intrusted with the care of the prisoner to be put to instant death.

A short time after the miraculous deliverance of St. Peter, a controversy occurred between the Jewish and Gentile converts, on the subject of the Mosaic institutions. The Jews contended, that circumcision, and a strict observance of the precepts of the ceremonial law, as well as those of the Gospel, were essentially necessary to salvation. In consequence of this dispute, a council of the apostles and brethren was summoned to meet in Jerusalem; and, in this assembly, Peter, after reminding his auditors that the Almighty had been graciously pleased to appoint him the first preacher of the Gospel among the Gentiles, he said, that by conferring upon them the Holy Spirit, God had admitted those people into the communion of his church; and that therefore, to impose upon them an adherence to the precepts of the ceremonial law, would be to offer an offence to the Almighty, who had given sufficient assurances, that both Gentiles and Jews would obtain salvation through the grace of the Gospel.

Peter's address proved entirely satisfactory to his brethren; and it was unanimously resolved, that no other injunction than the observance of some particular precepts, which were deemed salutary and convenient both to the Jews and Gentiles, should be imposed upon them. This decision was drawn up in the form of a synodical epistle, and sent to the churches established in various parts, for the purpose of appeasing those contentions and animosities to which the dispute had given rise.

Some time after the above decision, Peter quitted Jerusalem, and repaired to Antioch, where, disregarding the distinction of meats prescribed by the law, he ate and conversed with the Gentile proselytes. This practice he continued till the arrival of certain Jewish converts from Jerusalem, who were still tenaciously observant of the ceremonial law. Lest he should offend the people, he separated himself from the Gentiles, refusing to eat, or hold further communion with them. This example confirmed the Jews in their superstitious observance of the law, and perplexed the Gentiles with new doubts. Hence were the ancient and inveterate prejudices between the Jews and Gentiles revived; and, after the example of the apostles, the whole body of the Jewish converts separated themselves from the society of the Gentile Christians; and even Barnabas followed this example of dissimulation.

St. Paul being now at Antioch, he personally opposed the conduct of Peter, severely reproving him for his gross prevarication and hypocrisy. He exposed the inconsistency of St. Peter, saying, that he, being himself a Jew, and consequently under a more immediate obligation of observing the Mosaic law, was highly deserving censure, since he had divested himself of the yoke, and, at the same time, endeavoured to impose it upon the Gentiles, who had never been under the necessity of conforming to the ceremonies of the Israelites.

Almost the whole of what we have hitherto related concerning St. Peter, is founded

on the authority of scripture: but for further particulars of the life of this apostle, we must have recourse to those writers of ancient history who are most esteemed on account of their authenticity and candour.

How long Peter continued at Antioch, and whither he went immediately after his departure from thence, are matters of uncertainty. It is, however, certain beyond dispute, that he was indefatigably assiduous in promoting the Gospel of Christ: and we are informed, that, exclusive of the strenuous and successful measures he pursued for the establishment of christianity in the eastern quarters of the globe, he preached in Africa, Sicily, Italy, and also in our Britain; where he is said to have resided a considerable time, and to have obtained a great number of converts by his preaching.

St. Peter visited Rome, where, we are informed, he sojourned several years; but the emperor Claudius, taking advantage of some seditious practices among the Jews, published an edict for their expulsion; and Peter, with others, retired, and, going to Jerusalem, was present at the synod which we have lately mentioned.

Towards the conclusion of the reign of Nero, Peter returned to Rome, where he found the minds of the people violently prejudiced against the doctrines of the Gospel, by the deceptions of Simon Magus, whom, as we have related, he had chastised for his wicked practices in Samaria. Foreseeing that the contrivances of this abominable impostor would hasten his death, Peter applied himself, with redoubled vigour, to fortify the minds of his followers, and to confirm them in a belief of the divine truths of the Gospel. For effecting this salutary purpose, he resolutely opposed the delusive machinations of the great deceiver of mankind. In the last year of his life, Peter seems to have written his two epistles to the dispersed Jews in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia; and in an appointed controversy with Simon, he publicly exposed the magical impostures of that monster of iniquity; and afterwards, through the divine assistance, brought him to an ignominious, miserable, and exemplary death*.

News of the death of Simon being communicated to the emperor, he determined to avenge himself both for the loss of his favourite, and the endeavours used by the apostles to "turn mankind from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." He accordingly issued an order for taking Peter into custody, together with his companion St. Paul.

St. Ambrose informs us, that the people, perceiving the danger to which St. Peter was exposed, advised him to retire from Rome; and that yielding, though reluctantly, to their persuasions, he escaped by night. But as he was passing the gate, he was met by a figure resembling his beloved Master; and upon Peter asking whither he was going, he was answered, "To Rome, to be crucified a second time." Peter understanding this as reproof for his want of resolution, returned into the city; and presently afterwards he was apprehended, and, together with St. Paul, committed to the Mamertine prison; where they remained eight or nine months, constantly employed in preaching to their fellow-prisoners, and to those people who resorted to them, and in other religious exercises. It is supposed that during this confinement, and but a short time before his death, Peter wrote his second epistle to the dispersed Jews.

Upon the return of Nero from Achaia, he resolved to sacrifice the apostles to his cruelty

* Hegesippus the younger thus writes; "There was, at this time, says he, in Rome, a gentleman of some note, a kinsman to the emperor, lately dead. Those, who knew St. Peter's power in working miracles, advised his friends to send for him, and others likewise prevailed, that Simon the magician might be sent for. Glad of this occasion to magnify himself before the people, Simon propounded to Peter, that, if he raised the man to life, Peter, who had reviled the mighty power of God (as he styled himself), should lose his life; but that, if Peter prevailed, he would submit to the same penalty. Peter accepted the challenge; and, when Simon began his charms and enchantments, the dead body seemed to move his hand: whereupon the people, who stood by, thinking that the person was alive, were going to fall foul upon Peter, for daring to oppose so great a power. But Peter, intreating their patience, desired only that the magician might be removed from the bedside; which when they had done, the deception vanished, and the body remained without the least sign of motion. Then Peter, standing at a good distance from the bed, silently made his addresses to heaven, and when he had done, in the presence of them all, commanded the man, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to arise, which he instantly did: so that the people, changing their minds, were going to stone the magician; but that Peter interposed for his life, by telling them, that it would be punishment enough to him, to live, and see that, in despite of all his power and malice, the kingdom of Christ would increase and flourish."

and revenge. It was the pleasure of the Almighty, that St. Peter should now be released from the afflictions incidental to this sublunary life, and that his pious labours should be rewarded with the blessings of immortality. Being condemned by the Roman emperor to suffer death, he was conducted to the summit of the Vatican mount, adjacent to the Tiber, there to surrender up his life on the cross.

Upon his arrival at the place of execution, he requested that he might not suffer in the usual manner, but with his head towards the earth: saying, that he was unworthy to die in the posture in which his blessed Redeemer had suffered. This was complied with; and he yielded up his soul, glorifying the name of God. St. Peter and St. Paul suffered martyrdom on the same day, being, according to the calculations of many learned chronologists, in the year of our Lord 65.

The body of St. Peter is said to have been embalmed, according to the Jewish custom, by a presbyter named Marcellinus, and to have been buried in the Vatican near the triumphal way. A small church was soon afterwards erected on the spot where the body was deposited. This building was destroyed by Heliogabalus, and the remains of the apostle were removed to the cemetery in the Appian Way. In the time of Cornelius, the body was, by order of that pope, conveyed back to the Vatican, where the emperor Constantine erected, to the memory of this apostle, a superb church, which bears his name, and is considered as one of the most stupendous and magnificent structures in the world.

That St. Peter was a married man, is beyond dispute; for his wife's mother is mentioned in scripture. A tradition is extant, mentioning, that long before the death of the apostle, his wife suffered martyrdom; and that, as she was proceeding to the place of execution, he exhorted her to rely on the mediation of the blessed Jesus. He is said to have left one daughter, named Petronilla; but this is not ascertained to any degree of certainty.

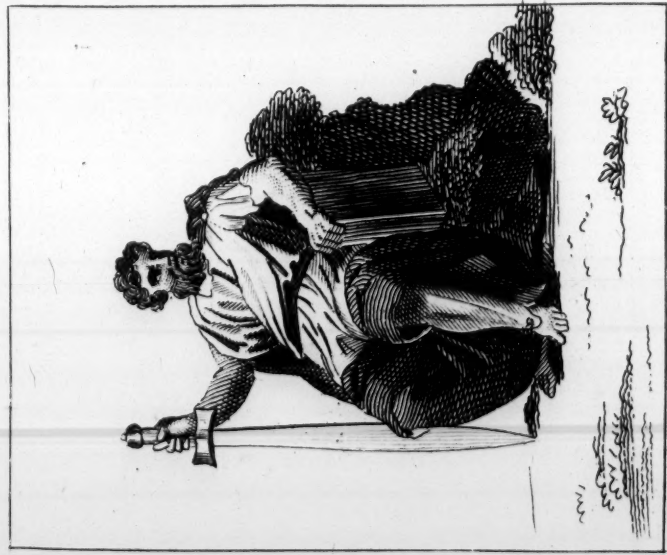
THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL.

TRANSACTIONS OF THIS GREAT APOSTLE OF THE GENTILES, FROM THE TIME OF HIS CONVERSION, WITH AN ACCOUNT OF HIS MINISTRY, TRAVELS, SUFFERINGS, AND MARTYRDOM.

THIS apostle was a descendent of the race of Abraham, and a native of Tarsus, the metropolis of Cilicia, a rich and populous Roman municipium, or free corporation, situated about three hundred miles from Jerusalem. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, and born about two years before our blessed Saviour. St. Paul was educated in Jerusalem, under the celebrated rabbi Gamaliel. He was one of the most rigid and zealous observers of the law of Moses; and at an early period of life attached himself to the sect of Pharisees.

With respect to his double capacity of being of Jewish extraction, and born a Roman citizen, he had two names, Saul and Paul; the former being Hebrew, and the other Latin. The descendents of Benjamin were accustomed to give the name of Saul to their children, from the time of the first king of Israel, who was chosen out of that tribe; and Paul was a name common among the Romans. He was brought up to the trade of tent-making; it being an invariable practice of the Jews, to cause their children to be instructed in some useful occupation, that, in case of a change of circumstances, they might be able to earn a livelihood.

Saul, being of an active and zealous disposition, became a distinguished advocate in favour of the law of Moses, and the traditions of the elders. He was impatient of all opposition to the doctrines and tenets in which he had been educated, and a vehement blasphemer and persecutor of Christians. But, in justification of the conduct of this apostle, in the early part of his life, it must be observed, that he acted according to the dictates of his conscience, whereby he conceived himself to be bound to do "many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Hence then it appears, that the prejudices of education, and



S^T. PAUL.



S^T. PETER.



S^T. THOMAS.



S^T. ANDREW.



S^T. JAMES, *the Great*.



S^T. BARTHOLOMEW.







The CONVERSION of S^T PAUL.

and the natural warmth of his temper, co-operated to incite him to those implacable persecutions of the Christians, for which he was so noted.

Saul was one of those who engaged in the disputation with Stephen the martyr, concerning the Messiah; but how far he was accessory in procuring him to be put to death by false accusation, is uncertain. After this, he procured a commission from the Sanhedrim to extend his persecution to Damascus, and to bring back in chains such Christians as fled thither for shelter. But on his way to Damascus to execute the commission of the Jewish Sanhedrim, a light, far more refulgent than the meridian brightness of the sun, darted upon him. Saul, and the persons who accompanied him, were thrown into the utmost consternation, and they fell from their horses prostrate on the earth. A voice, in the Hebrew language, was now heard to say, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Upon this, Saul said, "Who art thou, Lord?" He was immediately answered, "I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." These words implied, that all his endeavours to extirpate that faith which his disciples reposed in him would prove ineffectual; and, like kicking against the spikes, would serve only to wound and torment himself.

Being now perfectly convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, Saul said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Upon this, the blessed Jesus informed him of the reason of his appearance, saying, "Arise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of those things in which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the Gentiles; unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me." Our blessed Saviour commanded Saul to repair immediately to the city, referring him for further instructions to one of his followers named Ananias.

Arising from the earth, Saul found himself deprived of sight; and therefore his companions, who heard, but did not understand the voice, led him to the city of Damascus, where he entered the house of one Judas, and there remained without sight for three days: during which space he neither ate nor drank, but employed the whole time in humble and fervent prayer to God.

Our Redeemer now appearing to Ananias, commanded him to go to the house of Judas, and inquire for Saul of Tarsus, whom he had chosen to preach the Gospel, both to the Jews and Gentiles; mentioning, at the same time, the great sufferings he would endure in the cause of his blessed Master.

In obedience to the divine command, Ananias repaired to Saul, and, laying his hands upon him, said, that Jesus had sent him to restore his sight; and, by an infusion of the Spirit, to give him a knowledge of those glorious truths which he had opposed; adding, that Jesus was now willing to receive him by baptism into his church, and to constitute him a member of his body. Ananias had no sooner concluded, than Saul recovered his sight.

To the utter astonishment of the multitude, Saul now publicly proclaimed the Gospel of Christ, asserting that "Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God;" and demonstrating this great truth by such incontrovertible testimony, as would admit of no reply from the enemies of the Christian doctrine.

Soon after the miraculous conversion of St. Paul, he travelled into Arabia Petræa, where he received a full revelation of the mysteries of christianity. Having preached in various parts of the country, he returned to Damascus, where a great number, both Jews and Gentiles, were converted by his ministry. The great success of the preaching of St. Paul so irritated the Jews, that after he had remained in Damascus, and the parts adjacent thereto, about two or three years, they prevailed upon the governor to determine upon putting him to death: but knowing that he had a vast number of friends in Damascus, his enemies foresaw, that to apprehend him would be an undertaking of considerable difficulty. They continually searched for him in the houses where he was supposed to conceal himself, and obtained a body of soldiers from the governor to watch the gates, lest he should escape their fury. While he was thus circumstanced, his Christian friends exerted their utmost endeavours

endeavours for giving him an opportunity of privately retiring from the city: but finding it impossible to effect an escape through either of the gates, they lowered him in a basket from the window of one of their houses; and by that means he eluded the vigilance of the people employed to apprehend him.

St. Paul now returned to Jerusalem; where the Christians, however, avoided his society: but Barnabas introduced him to Peter, and James the bishop of Jerusalem, informing them of his miraculous conversion; in consequence of which, they kindly entertained him for the space of fifteen days.

Being warned by God in a vision, that his testimony would not be received at Jerusalem, and that it was expedient he should depart, and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, St. Paul returned to Tarsus, his native city: from whence he in a short time accompanied Barnabas to Antioch, to assist in propagating christianity among the inhabitants of that city. St. Paul resided a whole year in this city, where the disciples first acquired the appellation of Christians, being before distinguished by the name of Nazarenes.

A dreadful famine raged about this time in many parts of the Roman empire, and particularly in Judæa. In consequence of this calamity, Barnabas and Saul were deputed to convey contributions from the Christians of Antioch to their distressed brethren in Jerusalem. Immediately after executing their commission, they returned to Antioch; and while they were there employed in the exercise of their religious duty, it was revealed to them by the Holy Ghost, that it was the pleasure of the Lord that they should preach the Gospel in distant parts.

They accordingly departed, and first visited Seleucia, from whence they sailed for Cyprus; and at Salamis, a considerable city in that island, they preached in the Jewish synagogue. From hence they proceeded to Paphos, the residence of Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of the island; a man who, though of great wisdom and integrity, had yielded to the seductions of Bar-Jesus, a Jewish impostor, who styled himself Elymas, or the magician. The apostles severely rebuked Elymas for his opposition to the truths of the Gospel, and informed him, that he would speedily be made a signal instance of the divine vengeance; and of this he was no sooner informed, than he was deprived of his sight. This miracle, in conjunction with the preaching of the apostles, convinced the proconsul of the truth of the Gospel, to which he became a convert.

St. Paul, accompanied by Titus, repaired to Phrygia in Pamphylia, and from thence to Antioch, the metropolis of Pisidia, where Paul preached in the synagogue on the two succeeding sabbaths. The impression which the discourses of Paul made upon the minds of the people, so exasperated the Jews, that they exclaimed against Jesus of Nazareth, in a style of the most shocking blasphemy. But, notwithstanding their malicious and vehement opposition, the apostles persevered in the discharge of their duty, and obtained a great number of converts.

By base and artful insinuations, a number of the bigotted women were induced to attempt inflaming their husbands against the apostles, who, in consequence of this stratagem, were driven out of the city. Upon their departure, they shook the dust from their feet, agreeable to the command of Christ, and in testimony of their disapprobation of the ingratitude and infidelity of their enemies and opposers.

From Antioch they proceeded to Iconium, the capital of Lycaonia, in the Lesser Asia, where their preaching was attended with great success. Though they had made converts of a very considerable part of the inhabitants of the city, others still entertained the most implacable enmity towards them. The unbelieving Jews prevailed upon a number of the Gentiles to join them in opposing the apostles, whom this faction, at length, determined to stone to death: but, being apprised of this cruel design, they privately departed.

Proceeding to Lystra, they preached the Gospel in different places of public worship; and, amidst a numerous congregation, St. Paul, beholding a man who had been born a cripple, said to him aloud, "Stand upright on thy feet:" and these words were no sooner pronounced, than he rose and walked. This miracle raised the admiration of the spectators, who being educated in the superstitious customs of the heathen worship, cried out,

"The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." The fame of this wonderful cure was soon spread throughout the city; and the inhabitants assembled, who being preceded by the priest of Jupiter, and several oxen decorated with garlands, repaired to the house where the apostles resided, in order to offer up sacrifices to them, and otherwise honour them as divinities.

Paul and Barnabas were no sooner informed of their intention, than, being greatly affected on account of the superstitious notions of the people, they rent their garments in testimony of their abhorrence of the idolatrous principles of the multitude. Addressing themselves to the people, they said, that the miracle was performed in the name of Christ; and that they themselves, being no more than men, were consequently unworthy divine honours; but they exhorted them to pay their adorations to that almighty Being, to whose bounty alone they were indebted for all the blessings they enjoyed.

By the arguments of the apostles, the multitude were, though with difficulty, persuaded to decline their intended idolatrous sacrifice. The apostles continued to proclaim the happy tidings of salvation, through repentance, and faith in our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: but they were still harrassed by the malicious and bigotted Israelites, some of whom coming from Antioch and Iconium to Lystra, instilled such vile prejudices into the minds of the people, that they cast stones at, and in other respects treated the apostles with the most savage barbarity. St. Paul nearly fell a sacrifice to this severity; for he was deprived of all sensation, and dragged out of the city under the supposition that he was dead. While the Christians of Lystra were lamenting over him, and probably preparing to convey him to a place of interment, he arose, and returned with them into the city. On the following day, Paul and Barnabas departed to Derbe, and gained many converts to the Gospel of Christ.

In a short time they re-visited Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia, where, after confirming the faith of the people they had converted to christianity, they appointed elders and pastors to yield them further instructions as to their religious duties.

Passing through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia; and after preaching at Perga, they proceeded to Attalia. Having completed the circuit of their ministry, they returned to Antioch in Syria, from whence they at first departed.

The famous controversy now occurred, with respect to the observation of the Jews' ceremonies in the Christian dispensation. Paul and Barnabas went to consult with the apostles and other brethren at Jerusalem, as to the most expedient measures for terminating their controversy. They addressed themselves to Peter, James, and John, who perceiving that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed to Paul, and that of the circumcision to Peter, it was resolved, that the former should preach to the Gentiles, and the latter to the Jews. A council being summoned, a resolution unanimously passed, that the Gentiles were not under the obligation of the law of Moses, and therefore that some persons of their own church should be joined with Paul and Barnabas to carry the decrees of the council to Antioch.

St. Paul and his companions returned to Antioch, whither Peter also repaired in a short time after. The decretal epistle being read in the church, the converts familiarly associated with the Gentiles: but upon the arrival of some of the Jews from Jerusalem, St. Peter separated himself from the Gentiles, refusing to hold any communication with them. Upon this occasion, St. Paul severely rebuked him for the practice of hypocrisy (see before, p. 396).

Paul, accompanied by Silas, visited the churches of Syria and Cilicia, and from thence proceeded to Crete, where Paul constituted Titus to be the first bishop and pastor of the island. Hence Paul and Silas, by the way of Cilicia, came to Lystra, where they found Timothy, whom Paul designed for the companion of his future travels. But knowing that his being uncircumcised, would occasion the Jews to object to his Gospel, he caused him to submit to that institution. St. Paul and his companions now passed through Phrygia into the country of Galatia, where they were held in high veneration, being esteemed the immediate messengers of heaven. By a revelation, St. Paul was prohibited from preaching in Asia, and by a second vision he was commanded to repair to Macedonia.

Being joined by St. Luke, who from this time became his inseparable companion, St. Paul and his associates passed from Asia into Europe. They sailed to the island of Samothracia, in the Ægean Sea, and the following day arrived at Neapolis, a part of Macedonia. From Neapolis they proceeded to Philippi, the capital of that part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony, where they continued some days.

While they remained in these parts, Paul preached in the *proseucha*, or oratory of the Jews, which was situated by the side of the river, and at some distance from the city. By the influence of the Holy Spirit, he obtained a great number of converts, among whom was a woman named Lydia, a Jewish proselyte, and a native of Thyatira. This woman and her whole family being baptized, she became exceedingly importunate that Paul and his companions should reside at her house; and they were prevailed upon to accept her invitation.

While the apostles remained in this city, they daily resorted to the oratory, for the purpose of employing themselves in religious exercises. After some days had elapsed, as they were passing to the usual place of devotion, they were met by a young woman, who, by the influence of an evil spirit, possessed a prophetic faculty of divination. This woman followed Paul and his companions, exclaiming, "These men are the servants of the most High God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." In this manner she behaved on several successive days; and at length Paul, in the name of Jesus, commanded the spirit to depart from her; and the *dæmon* immediately obeyed.

Her masters had been accustomed to derive considerable emoluments from her predictions; and therefore they were highly exasperated against the apostles, for having deprived them of a power which had proved so profitable to them. By the instigation of these men, the multitude were inflamed against Paul and his companions, whom they seized, and conducted before the magistrates of the colony, accusing them of having introduced innovations, in which they, being Romans, could not lawfully acquiesce.

Desirous of preserving the tranquillity of the state, the magistrates resolved to punish Paul and his companions, whom the multitude had accused of seditious practices; and therefore they ordered them to be stripped, and severely scourged.

This discipline was inflicted upon the apostles, who were afterwards committed to prison, the keeper being ordered to guard them with uncommon vigilance: and he accordingly put them into the inner prison, and confined their feet in the stocks. Notwithstanding their disagreeable situation, their minds were perfectly serene; and at midnight they sung the praises of, and prayed to the Lord in so audible a voice, that they were heard in every part of the prison. Their prayers to the throne of grace were not in vain; for the very foundations of the prison were shaken by an earthquake; the prisoners were released from their chains, and the gates opened. The gaoler, being roused from his sleep, concluded that all his prisoners had escaped, and being driven by this apprehension to a state of desperation, he attempted to put a period to his life. Observing his intention, Paul cried out, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here." The gaoler now imagined that the late convulsion of nature had been wrought by a divine power for the sake of the apostle, therefore, calling for a light, he hastened into their presence, and prostrated himself at their feet. He then conducted them to his house, bathed their stripes, and supplicated them to instruct him in the knowledge of that God, through whose unbounded goodness mankind might secure their eternal salvation. St. Paul replied, that if he sincerely believed in Jesus Christ, he might be saved with his whole house. Accordingly the gaoler, and all the persons of his family, received baptism, and were admitted members of the church of Christ.

Early in the morning, the magistrates, either having heard of the extraordinary events which had happened, or reflecting that the severity of their proceedings was wholly unjustifiable, dispatched an officer to the prison, with orders for restoring the apostles to freedom. This message was joyfully received by the gaoler, who bid the prisoners "depart in peace." But that the magistrates might be sensible of the injustice of which they had been guilty in punishing him and his companions without either trial or examination, St. Paul sent them a message, purporting, that as they had proceeded to so unwarrantable an extremity

mity as to scourge and imprison subjects to the Roman empire, in open violation of the law, it was expected that they would themselves repair to the prison, and make some compensation for the illegality of their proceedings. The Roman laws permitted no freeman to be punished without a formal trial, nor till sentence of condemnation had been pronounced against him; and therefore the magistrates were terrified, lest they should be called to a severe account for their delinquency. Induced by this consideration, they repaired to the prison, and in the most submissive and earnest manner intreated the apostles to depart, lest the public tranquillity should be interrupted.

How inadequate soever this was to the cruel treatment they had experienced, the submission of the magistrates was accepted by the meek disciples of the blessed Jesus; who, departing from the prison, went to the house of Lydia, where they were joyfully congratulated by their brethren, on occasion of their deliverance.

Having thus, as appears from the epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians, established a very considerable church, the apostles quitted Philippi, and pursued their journey towards the west. Upon their arrival at Thessalonica, the metropolis of Macedonia, situated about one hundred and twenty miles from Philippi, they entered the Jewish synagogue, where St. Paul preached to the people. While the apostles remained in Thessalonica, they resided in the house of a Christian named Jason, who entertained them in a most courteous and friendly manner. But the Jews still persevered in their obstinate incredulity, refusing to acknowledge Christ as the Messiah, and persecuting his disciples with unrelenting fury.

A number of Jews assembled before the house of Jason, with a design of surrendering Paul into the power of the enraged multitude: but in this they were disappointed; for, being apprised of the intention of the banditti, Paul and Silas removed to another part of the city. This disappointment served more violently to exasperate the rage of the populace, who now determined to wreak vengeance upon Jason, for having afforded an asylum to the apostles of our blessed Saviour. Seizing Jason, and several of his Christian brethren, they conducted them before the magistrates, alledging, that they had been guilty of seditious practices, in setting up Jesus as a king, in contempt of the dignity and power of the emperor of Rome. Jason was only accused of harbouring those who had endeavoured to introduce innovations in the government: but the magistrates could not be prevailed upon to release him and his companions till they had given security for their appearance, in case of being called upon to answer the charges exhibited against them.

The tumult being appeased, Paul and Silas, being favoured in their escape by a considerable number of Thessalonians, retired by night to Berea, a city about fifty miles distance towards the south. Here Paul preached in the synagogue, particularly addressing himself to his countrymen, to effect whose conversion he was exceedingly anxious. He frequently adverted to the scriptures of the Old Testament, deducing therefrom the most incontrovertible testimonies in support of the truths of the doctrines he had advanced. The inhabitants of Berea were not so obstinately perverse as the people of Thessalonica, for they attended to the doctrines of St. Paul with serious respect and unfeigned reverence. He obtained a great number both of Jewish and Gentile converts, among whom were several women distinguished for their extensive possessions, and elevated rank in life.

News of this extraordinary success of the gospel being transmitted to Thessalonica, the Jews of that city were highly incensed against the apostles, and, repairing to Berea, by a variety of stratagems they exasperated the populace against them. In consequence hereof, Paul was under the necessity of privately departing: but Silas and Timothy, being less popular, and consequently less envied, still remained in the city.

Paul having retired from Berea, a report was circulated, that he meant to depart from Greece by sea; it being supposed, that this would tend to appease that violent spirit of persecution which the Jews had maliciously excited against him. By the order of the apostle, the guides who attended him conducted him to Athens, and returned, after being ordered to direct Silas and Timothy to repair to Athens with all possible expedition.

Taking an accurate survey of the city of Athens, St. Paul was greatly afflicted to find that it contained vast numbers of temples dedicated to the worship of different idols; he there-
fore

fore exerted his utmost efforts for effecting the conversion of these misguided people, to whom his doctrine was equally new and extraordinary. The Athenians did not persecute him as the Jews had done; but the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers considered the Gospel of our blessed Saviour as a fabulous invention; while others supposed Jesus to be some newly discovered deity, whose image the apostle wished to be erected in their temples.

The people were unwilling to receive any new objects of worship: but the Areopagus, or supreme council of the city, being invested with power to decide with respect to all objects of public adoration, he was summoned to appear before the judges, and to explain to them the nature of the worship he was so desirous to establish. Being conducted into the presence of this assembly, in an elegant address, he explained to them the principles on which the Gospel was founded. In the course of his harangue, he mentioned the resurrection, which was ridiculed by some of his auditors: but others, though not perfectly satisfied by the proofs he had advanced in favour of the Christian system, attended to his arguments with candour, and were deeply impressed by the strength of his reasoning and the elegance of his language. He was at length dismissed by the council, who said they would give him a second audience on the same subject. St. Paul's discourse on the above occasion was not wholly without success, for some few of his auditors were converted to a belief in his Gospel; and among them were Dionysius, one of the judges of the court, and Damaris, supposed to be his wife. It is generally believed that this Dionysius was afterwards constituted first bishop of Athens by St. Paul.

During the residence of St. Paul in the city of Athens, Timothy, in obedience to the instructions he had received, hastened to join him; and upon his arrival, he informed St. Paul, that from the time of his departure the Christians of Thessalonica had been cruelly persecuted by their fellow-citizens. This intelligence gave much concern to St. Paul, who at first resolved to visit his brethren in person, in order to administer comfort to them, and confirm them in the faith they had embraced: but declining this intention, he dispatched Timothy to fortify their minds against being discouraged by those persecutions, to which he had informed them the professors of the Gospel of Christ would be continually exposed.

Soon after the departure of Timothy, St. Paul proceeded from Athens to the city of Corinth, where he found Aquila and Priscilla his wife, who had been banished from Rome by the decree of Claudius. We have already observed that St. Paul was brought up to tent-making, at which trade he now worked, in conjunction with Aquila, that he might not be burdensome to the new converts.

St. Paul, having resided some time in Corinth, was joined by Silas and Timothy, and continued to preach the Gospel with great fervency of devotion. His earnest exhortations provoked the obstinate Jews to treat the name of the holy Jesus with blasphemous indignity; and therefore the apostle told them, that, since they were determined to render themselves the objects of divine vengeance, he would no longer consider them as worthy of his labours, but would henceforth address himself to the Gentiles. Repairing to the house of Justus, a religious proselyte, he there by his preaching and miracles made a great number of converts; and among these were Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, together with Gaius and Stephanas, all of whom with their families were baptized, and admitted into the communion of the Christian faith.

Lest the ingratitude and cruelty of the Jews should discourage this able minister from prosecuting the glorious works of proclaiming the ways of salvation, our blessed Saviour appeared to him in a vision, informing him, that, notwithstanding the little success which had hitherto attended his preaching, a great number of converts were to be gained in the place where he then resided; and therefore our Lord admonished him not to dread the power of his enemies, but to proceed with confidence and security in the discharge of the duties of his sacred function; assuring him, that he should constantly be an object of the divine care and protection. About this period, the apostle appears to have written his first epistle to the Thessalonians; and, before he quitted Corinth, he wrote his second epistle to the same people.

Upon

Upon leaving the city of Corinth, St. Paul embarked at the port of Cenchrea, and directed his course for Syria, being accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla. Upon his arrival at Ephesus, he preached in the synagogue of the Jews, whom he informed, that he was going to Jerusalem; adding, that he would return to them after the celebration of the passover. He sailed to Cæsarea, and from thence proceeded to Jerusalem, whence, having kept the passover, and encouraged his Christian brethren to persevere in an observance of the duties prescribed in the Gospel, he repaired to Antioch. Passing through the countries of Galatia and Phrygia, he confirmed the faith of the newly-converted Christians, and returned to Ephesus: to which city he was accompanied by Gaius of Derbe, Aristarchus a native of Thessalonica, Timotheus and Erastus of Corinth, and Titus.

Immediately after his arrival, he inquired of certain of his disciples, "Whether they had received the Holy Ghost?" and upon learning that they had received baptism only according to the institution of St. John, and professing they had not the least knowledge of the Holy Ghost, he caused them to be baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and after the apostle had prayed, and laid his hands upon them, they received the gift of tongues and other miraculous powers.

After this he continued to frequent the Jewish synagogues, exerting his most earnest endeavours to convince the multitude of the great truths of the Christian religion: but his doctrine being vehemently opposed by the enemies of our blessed Redeemer, he declined visiting those public buildings dedicated to divine worship, but delivered his instructions in the school of a public preceptor named Tyrannus.

Thus did he continue to preach the Gospel for two years, during which space he made a great number of converts. But, that the truth of the divinity of his commission might be confirmed by the most ample and indisputable testimony, the Lord was pleased to confirm the Gospel preached by St. Paul, by miraculous operations of a peculiar and extraordinary nature. He restored to health all afflicted persons, who besought him to relieve their sufferings; and if handkerchiefs or napkins were only touched by him, and applied to the sick, their diseases, whatever their degree of malignancy, were immediately removed.

About this time St. Paul wrote his epistle to the Galatians, among whom he learnt several corrupt opinions had been propagated, by persons who treated his person with contempt; and, to destroy the authority of his Gospel, slighted him as an apostle; urging, that his inferiority would be extremely manifest, upon comparing him with Peter, James, and John, who had familiarly conversed with Christ during his residence upon earth. In this epistle, therefore, he vindicates the honour of the apostleship; asserting, that he received his commission immediately from Christ, and that he was in no respect inferior to any of the apostles. He refutes those Judaical opinions which had infected the people, and concludes with instructing them in the necessary rules of a righteous life, becoming the Gospel.

In the city of Ephesus was a magnificent, rich, and beautiful temple, dedicated to Diana, whose image stood in the building. This figure was the object of public idolatry; and the priests had persuaded the people, that it was the work of the hands of their idol deity Jupiter himself. Hence it was held in high veneration, not only in Ephesus, but throughout Asia. The people were accustomed constantly to carry small silver images of the temple in their pockets, as incentives to their superstitious zeal. Hereby the manufacturers of silver, the principal of whom was named Demetrius, procured much employment. Perceiving that the introduction of christianity would, by abolishing idolatrous practices, prove exceedingly injurious to a lucrative employment, Demetrius summoned a meeting of the artists, whose business it was to make images of the temple; and represented to them, that if Paul was permitted to pursue his endeavours for bringing the temple into disrepute, they must be reduced to a state of poverty, in consequence of the ruin of their business. This address greatly inflamed the minds of the people, whom Demetrius had summoned to assemble: and vehemently exclaiming, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" they resolved to effect the destruction of the apostle.

Upon the celebration of public games, it was usual for slaves to be exposed to the fury of savage beasts for the diversion of the public. The party formed by Demetrius endeavoured

voured to seize Paul, in order to convey him to the theatre, and there expose him to the wild beasts. But being disappointed in this design, they hurried Gaius and Aristarchus, who were followers of Paul and natives of Macedonia, to the theatre, intending that they should be torn in pieces and devoured by the beasts.

Though Paul was exceedingly desirous of appearing publicly in the theatre in defence of his friends, he was, though with great difficulty, dissuaded from adopting a measure which could not fail of exposing him to the most imminent danger.

Gaius and Aristarchus being brought into the theatre, an amazing tumult ensued; and during the confusion, a Jew, named Alexander, was seized by the multitude, and expecting to fall a victim to popular rage, he prepared to make a defence. The multitude perceiving that he was a Jew, and suspecting that he was one of Paul's associates, the tumult was increased to the most extravagant degree, nothing being heard for the space of two hours, but the exclamation of "Great is Diana of Ephesus!" In consequence of this confusion, the officer who kept the register of the games, addressed himself to the multitude, censuring their intemperate conduct, and apprising them, that they had rendered themselves obnoxious to the effects of the displeasure of the magistracy. This discourse appeased the tumult, and Gaius, Aristarchus, and Alexander, being restored to liberty, the people returned to their respective habitations.

St. Paul says, "he fought with beasts at Ephesus." This expression, some think, alludes to the design of the enraged multitude, of exposing him to the fury of the wild beasts in the theatre; but has more probably a reference to the manners of the people, who sufficiently merited to be represented as wild beasts, or monsters of barbarity.

The Corinthian church being distracted by a variety of schisms and factions, St. Paul wrote his first epistle to the Corinthians, with a view of restoring tranquillity, and correcting those gross corruptions which prevailed among the Christians. A short time afterwards, Apollos and Zenos having resolved to repair to Crete, St. Paul sent by them his epistle to Titus, whom he had constituted bishop of that island. In this epistle, he fully instructs Titus in the several duties of his holy office.

After residing almost three years in the city of Ephesus, and founding a considerable church there, of which he had ordained Timothy the first bishop, St. Paul directed his course about two hundred miles to the northward, expecting to meet Timothy at Troas; but being disappointed, he took shipping, and pursued his journey to Macedonia, where he preached the Gospel in divers parts, travelling as far as Illyricum, now called Slavonia.

During this journey, St. Paul encountered many dangers and difficulties: but, amidst his difficulties, the arrival of Titus afforded a very seasonable relief to his harrassed and almost exhausted spirits. This worthy bishop brought with him large contributions from the Corinthian church; and from the example of these liberal Christians, St. Paul excited the Macedonians to an imitation of their benevolence; his design being, to render their bounty subservient to the relief of the distressed Christians at Jerusalem.

While Titus remained in Macedonia, St. Paul wrote his second epistle to the Corinthians, and sent it to them by Titus and Luke: and about the same time he wrote his first epistle to Timothy, whom he had left at Ephesus. Before Paul's departure from Greece, he visited Corinth, where he wrote his celebrated epistle to the Romans, which he sent to those people by Phœbe, archdeaconess of the church of Cenchrea.

St. Paul now determined to repair to Jerusalem, in order to distribute the contributions among the Christian brethren inhabiting that capital. Having commenced his journey, he received intelligence that the Jews had resolved not only to rob him, but also to put him to death; and, in consequence of this, he hastened back into Macedonia, and arriving at Philippi, proceeded from thence to Troas, where he remained seven days. On the sabbath, he preached to the inhabitants of Troas, and continued his discourse till midnight, purposing to depart early in the morning. Towards the conclusion of this discourse, several of his auditors were overtaken by sleep; and among these was a young man named Eutychus, who fell from the third story, and was taken up intirely dead: but the apostle addressed

addressed himself to Heaven in behalf of the deceased, who was restored to life, to the infinite astonishment of the multitude.

From Troas he travelled on foot to Assos, whither he had before sent his companions by sea. Hence they sailed to Mitylene, a city in the isle of Lesbos. The next day they sailed to Chios, and on that following disembarked at Trogyllium, a promontory of Ionia, near Samos. Arriving at Miletos on the following day, Paul sent to Ephesus, to summon the elders of the church to attend him. He reminded them of the fidelity with which he had discharged the duties of his ministry, exhorting them steadily to maintain their faith in the blessed and immaculate Jesus, who had yielded up his life as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of mankind. He informed them, that he was going to Jerusalem, where he was ignorant of what would befall him, excepting the events predicted by those who were endued with the prophetic gifts of the Holy Ghost. He said, he was conscious that he should sustain imprisonment and other afflictions; but on the score of his sufferings he felt no uneasiness, being willing to yield up his life, rather than in any respect violate the obedience which was due to his great Lord and Master. Having concluded a pious and pathetic discourse, St. Paul fervently addressed himself in prayer to Heaven, in which he was joined by the whole multitude, who accompanied him to his vessel; expressing the most poignant sorrow, in consequence of having informed them that they would "see his face no more."

From Miletos they proceeded to Coos, and from thence to Rhodes. From the latter island they sailed to Patara, the metropolis of Lycia, where they embarked on board a ship bound for Phœnicia. He remained a week in Phœnicia, where some of the Christian brethren endeavoured to dissuade him from going to Jerusalem: but no consideration of personal safety could induce the apostle to decline his resolution of exerting his utmost efforts for the propagation of the Gospel. Finding all their persuasions ineffectual, they accompanied Paul to the sea-side, where he kneeled and prayed with them; and after affectionately embracing them, he embarked and sailed to Ptolemais, from whence he the next day proceeded to Cæsarea.

Agabus, a Christian prophet, came at this time to Cæsarea; and, taking Paul's girdle, this man bound his own hands and feet with it; by this symbol signifying, that the Jews would bind Paul, and surrender him into the power of the Gentiles. Upon this his own companions joined the Christians of Cæsarea, earnestly beseeching that he would not go to Jerusalem: but finding his resolution immovable, they declined further importunity. Paul and his companions proceeded to Jerusalem, where they experienced a kind and friendly reception from their Christian brethren.

On the day after their arrival, they went to the house of St. James the apostle, where the bishops and governors of the church had assembled. He informed the meeting of the contributions he had received for the relief of the distressed Christian brethren; and particularized the success with which the Lord had been graciously pleased to bless his endeavours for propagating the Gospel; and hereupon they joined in thanksgiving to God. They observed to the apostle, that there were many thousands of Jewish converts in the city, who were zealously attached to the law of Moses; and that these people, being informed that he had instructed his Jewish converts to renounce circumcision, and the ceremonies of the law, would, upon receiving intelligence of his arrival, immediately assemble to become witnesses of his conduct, according to which they would regulate their future proceedings; therefore they advised him, as the most probable means of preventing a popular tumult, to join himself with four persons, who were at that time to accomplish a vow, and conform to the ceremonies required by the law. Convinced of the expediency of adopting this advice, St. Paul and the four other men, having purified themselves, repaired to the temple: signifying to the priest, that the time of a certain vow which they had made, being accomplished, they were come to make such offerings as were required by the obligation of the law.

When Paul had been seven days in Jerusalem, wholly employed in distributing alms, and in making the sacrifices enjoined by the law, certain Jews, who had violently opposed his doctrine in Asia, being come to Jerusalem, to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, fomented a tumult

a tumult against him, accusing him of having advanced doctrines destructive to the institutions of the Jewish law.

Hereupon a violent outrage ensued; and the riotous multitude, forcing the apostle out of the temple, beat him, and in other respects behaved towards him with shocking barbarity. These violent proceedings threatened an insurrection; and therefore Claudius Lysias, the Roman tribune, who had the command of the garrison in the castle Antonia, led forth the soldiers and tribunes to suppress the riot. The presence of Lysias awed the multitude, who now discontinued their cruelty to Paul; and the captain caused him to be put into chains, demanding what was the nature of his offence: but no particular charge being alledged against him, he was ordered to be taken into the castle. In the way, he requested permission to address himself to the captain; who, hearing him speak Greek, asked, if he was not the Egyptian who had some time before excited an insurrection in the city? Upon this, he assured him, that he was a native of Tarsus, and had been educated in the Jewish religion; adding, that, from a mistaken zeal, he had violently persecuted the Christians; and particularizing the several circumstances of his miraculous conversion, and of his subsequent trance, during which, he was instructed to depart from Jerusalem, and preach the Gospel in other parts.

Upon hearing Paul mention that he had received a commission to preach the Gospel, the fury of the populace became wholly ungovernable, and they united in insisting that he should be instantly put to death.

The captain of the guard commanded Paul to be brought within the temple, and to be scourged, till he should acknowledge the cause of that extraordinary aversion which the Jews had expressed against him; he was bound, and other preparations were making for executing this sentence, when the apostle demanded of one of the centurions, whether it was lawful to scourge a citizen of Rome who had not been tried, and consequently against whom no formal sentence had been pronounced. The centurion immediately hastened to Lysias, informing him, that the prisoner was a Roman, and therefore advising him to proceed with caution. Upon this, the governor came to the prison, and being informed by Paul, that he was born a free citizen of Rome, he reversed the order for subjecting him to the disgraceful punishment of scourging; and was greatly terrified upon reflecting, that he might be called to a severe account for having confined him in chains.

On the following day, he ordered Paul to be released from his chains; and, that the cause of the tumult might be discovered, he summoned the sanhedrim to assemble, and conducted the apostle before them. The apostle informed the council, that throughout his whole life he had conducted himself by the strictest rules of conscience and duty. "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God, until this day." This expression greatly exasperated the high-priest, who ordered some persons that stood near the apostle, to strike him on the face. Upon this, the apostle said to Ananias, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall." Hereupon, some of the spectators observed, that it was unlawful to revile God's high-priest; and this reproof the apostle received with great gentleness, excusing his inadvertency, and acknowledging that God himself had said, "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of the people." Perceiving that the council consisted both of Pharisees and Sadducees, he loudly exclaimed, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee;" adding, that he was brought before the tribunal, to answer for having asserted the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead*.

* But why should St. Paul say, that he was accused for asserting the general resurrection, when it was only the resurrection of Christ that he was called in question for? Now, in answer to this, it must be observed, that before our Saviour's passion, the doctrine which he preached was chiefly levelled against the vain traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees, but that, after his resurrection, the testimony of the apostles being this, "that Christ was risen from the dead," which was directly contrary to the notions of the Sadducees, these people became their hottest enemies, "being grieved (as the text expresses it) that they preached the resurrection of the dead through Jesus," Acts iv. 1. 2. as easily perceiving that the proof of the one, viz. "that Christ was risen," was a confirmation of the general resurrection. As therefore the resurrection of Christ was a pledge and assurance of a general resurrection, it was impossible for the apostles to attest the one, without asserting the other, since in the truth of the thing, and according to the sentiments of the Jews themselves, the resurrection was to be effected by the Messiah, for which reason we find St. Paul styling our Lord "the first fruits of them that slept," and declaring farther, that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," 1 Cor. xv. 20, 22.

The Pharisees favoured the doctrine of the resurrection, which was strenuously opposed by the Sadducees; and therefore the declaration of St. Paul created much confusion in the court. The dissensions of these two sects increased in so extravagant a degree, that the captain feared Paul would be torn in pieces, and therefore conveyed him back to the castle.

During the silence of night, St. Paul was comforted and encouraged by extraordinary communications of the divine Spirit, animating him to maintain his constancy and resolution; assuring him, that, in despite of the malicious designs of his enemies, he should live to bear testimony in support of the Gospel, even in the capital of the Roman empire.

On the following morning, about forty of the most turbulent Jews engaged in a confederacy for the purpose of sacrificing the life of Paul; ratifying their agreement by a solemn oath, and vowing, with shocking imprecations, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had perpetrated their barbarous design.

This iniquitous project was divulged to Paul by his sister's son, who also, at the request of the apostle, communicated it to Lyfias; who, in consequence of this information, commanded a party of horse and foot soldiers to be in readiness at nine o'clock in the evening, to conduct St. Paul before Felix*, the Roman governor of the province; to whom he also transmitted a narrative of the proceedings of the Jews against the prisoner, at the same time commanding his accusers to appear before the Roman magistrate. St. Paul was accordingly conducted to Cæsarea; and Felix informed him, that his cause should be decided immediately, after the arrival of his accusers; ordering him, in the mean time, to be secured in the place called Herod's Hall.

Soon after the arrival of Paul, a charge of sedition, heresy, and profanation of the temple, was exhibited against him by Tertullus. Having heard the accusation and the apostle's defence, Felix declined pronouncing judgment, saying, he would consult Lyfias, the governor of the castle; who, he said, could not but be qualified to relate the particulars of the tumult and sedition. He ordered Paul to remain a prisoner, indulging him, however, in the privilege of being visited by his friends.

A short time after this, Drusilla, a Jewess†, the wife of Felix, and daughter of the elder Herod, came to Cæsarea; and sending for Paul, the governor permitted him to explain the principles of the Christian doctrine in presence of his wife. Hereupon Paul delivered a pious, affecting, and persuasive discourse; and when he came to a description of the day of judgment, Felix trembled on his throne; and, abruptly interrupting the apostle, said, he would hear the conclusion of his discourse on a future opportunity. The conscience of Felix was dreadfully alarmed; for he was cruel, unjust, revengeful, and rapacious. He was informed, that Paul had possession of a considerable sum of money, and therefore he expected that he would purchase his freedom with a very liberal bribe: but being disappointed, he kept the apostle in prison for the space of two years.

* Claudius Felix, who, in Tacitus, is likewise called Antonius, because he was a slave both to the emperor Claudius, and his mother Antonia, was the brother of Pallas, the freed-man, and first favourite of the emperor, by whose interest he obtained the government of Judæa; but, in the administration of it, practised all manner of violence, avarice, and lust. The above cited historian tells us of him, that he made his will the law of his government, and ruled the province with all the authority of a king, and the insolence of a free slave, whom neither shame nor fear can restrain. He stuck at no manner of cruelty or injustice, having caused Jonathan, the high-priest, to be assassinated, merely because he sometimes reminded him of his mal-administration; and, to gratify his debauchery, he scrupled not to violate all laws, both human and divine. For, being in love with Drusilla, who was married to Azizus, king of the Emisenes, by the help of Simon the magician, a Jew of Cyprus, he forcibly took her from her husband's bed; and, in defiance of all law and right, kept her for his own wife. In short, his government was so grievous to the Jews, that they procured his recall, A. D. 60. and as several of them went to Rome after him, to complain of his extortions, and other acts of violence, he had undoubtedly been executed, had not his brother's credit preserved him.

† This Drusilla was the daughter of that Agrippa who put St. James to death, and imprisoned St. Peter, and was himself miraculously smitten, in the midst of his oration at Cæsarea, whereof we have given a full account before. This daughter of his passed for one of the greatest beauties of her age, but was far from being remarkable either for her piety or chastity. At first she was promised in marriage to Epiphanes, the son of Antiochus, king of Comagene, upon condition that he would submit to be circumcised; but, when he refused to comply with that, the match broke off, and she afterwards was married to Azizus, who accepted of the condition. When she left him, and took it in her head to live with Felix, who was a Gentile, she forsook her own, and conformed to his religion, according to the testimony of Josephus, Antiq. l. 20. and therefore when St. Luke calls her a Jewess, he must be understood thereby to denote her birth and parentage, rather than the form and profession of her religion.

Felix, being succeeded in office by Portius Festus, suffered Paul to remain in prison, in order to gratify the malice of the Jews, and induce them to speak favourably of his government, after his departure from Judæa.

Upon the arrival of Festus in Jerusalem, the high-priest and the members of the Sanhedrim, brought an indictment against Paul, requesting that he might be sent for to Jerusalem, in order to take his trial, their design being to assassinate him on the way. But Festus informed them, that he meant, in a short time, to go to Cæsarea, where they might exhibit their accusations against him.

Upon the arrival of Felix at Cæsarea, the Jews renewed their accusations against Paul; but, notwithstanding all their wicked and malicious artifices, they were unable to prove him guilty of any crime. Festus, however, being desirous of obtaining the favour of the Jews, asked Paul, whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem, for the purpose of taking his trial; and to this the apostle answered, "I appeal unto Cæsar*."

Some time after this appeal, king Agrippa, who succeeded his father Herod in the tetrarchate of Galilee, and his sister Berenice, came to congratulate Festus on his accession to the government. The apostle being brought into court, where Agrippa, Berenice, and a splendid retinue had assembled, Festus said, that, in consequence of his having appealed to Cæsar, he had resolved to send the prisoner to Rome: but was, notwithstanding, desirous that his case should be debated before king Agrippa, that some particulars might be collected for the purpose of grounding a criminal charge.

Being informed by Agrippa, that he was at liberty to make his defence, the apostle related, with what unrelenting cruelty he had persecuted the Christians, and particularized the circumstances of his wonderful conversion. While the apostle was pleading in his own defence, he was interrupted by Festus, who accused him of insanity: but the apostle denied this charge, saying, that his judgment was unimpaired, and that he spoke the dictates of truth. So eloquent and persuasive was the discourse of St. Paul, that Agrippa acknowledged to him, that he had almost prevailed upon him to embrace the Christian faith.

It was at length resolved that Paul should be sent to Rome, and be committed to the care of Julius, commander of a company belonging to the legion of Augullus; and he was accompanied by St. Luke, Aristarchus, Trophimus, and some others. Embarking at Adramyttium, after a dangerous voyage, they were cast on the coast of the island of Melita†, or Malta, where they landed, and experienced a friendly reception from the inhabitants. While St. Paul was putting some sticks upon a fire, round which a number of people had

* This way of appealing, frequent among the Romans, was introduced to defend and secure the lives and fortunes of the populace from the unjust incroachments and over-rigorous severities of the magistrates; whereby it was lawful, in cases of oppression, to appeal to the people for redress and rescue; a thing more than once settled by the sanction of the Valerian laws. These appeals were generally made in writing, by appellatory libels, given into the court, and containing an account of the appellant, the person against whom, and from whose sentence, he did appeal: but, where the case was done in open court, it was enough for the criminal verbally to declare that he did appeal. In great and weighty causes, the appeal was made to the prince himself; whereupon not only at Rome, but in all the provinces of the empire, every proconsul and governor was strictly forbidden to execute, scourge, bind, or put any badge of servility, upon a citizen, or any that had the privilege of a citizen, who had made his appeal; or any ways to hinder him from going to Rome, to obtain justice at the hands of the emperor, 'who had as much regard to the liberty of his subjects (says the law itself) as they could have for their good will and obedience to him.' And this was exactly St. Paul's case; who, knowing that he should have no fair and equitable dealing at the hands of the governor, when once he came to be swayed by the Jews, his sworn and inveterate enemies, appealed from him to the emperor, which was a privilege so often and so plainly settled by the Roman laws, that Festus durst not deny his demand.

† This island is supposed to have had its name at first from the great quantity of honey which it produced. It yielded likewise cotton wool in abundance, which the people used to sow, as we do corn; and no small store of excellent fruits, both for taste and colour; and yet the whole island is one continued rock, and has not above three feet depth of earth. It is computed to be about twelve miles broad and twenty long; lies distant from Sicily about sixty miles, and much more from the coast of Africa, so that no other reason can be given why some Geographers have reckoned it among the African isles, but that it once belonged to Carthage. At present it is called Malta, and is remarkable on account of its being granted to the knights of St. John of Jerusalem (formerly called the knights of Rhodes, but now knights of Malta) by Charles V. after the Turks had beaten them out of Rhodes, in the year of our Lord 1530. These knights, according to their institution, are in number a thousand, whereof five hundred are to be resident in the island, and the other five hundred are dispersed through Christendom, in their several seminaries, which are in France, Italy, and Germany, as there was one likewise in England, before it was suppressed by Henry VIII. Each of these seminaries hath over it a grand prior. He, that is chief of the whole order, is styled grand master of the hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, and the others are commonly called knights hospitallers, from whom many places, that formerly belonged to them here in England, still retain something of their name, by being called, by contraction, spitals.

assembled, a viper * came from among the wood, and fastened on his hand. Hereupon the people imagined that he was some notorious offender, who had been rescued from the dangers of the tempest, that he might be thus exposed as an exemplary object of the divine vengeance: but upon seeing him shake the venomous animal into the fire, they changed their opinion, and proclaimed him to be a god.

After remaining three months in this island, they took shipping in a vessel called the *Castor and Pollux*, and landed at Puteoli. The Christian inhabitants of the city of Rome, being apprised of the approach of St. Paul, great numbers of them went to meet and pay their respects to him; some travelling to a place called the Three Taverns, about thirty miles from Rome, and others as far as the Appii-forum, situated at the distance of fifty-one miles from the capital.

Upon his arrival in the city of Rome, St. Paul sent for the heads of the Jewish confistory, and informed them, that the malice of his enemies had compelled him to appeal to Cæsar, as the only means of rescuing himself from an injurious and cruel imputation. Paul resided two years in Rome, constantly exerting his best endeavours, both by preaching and writing, for the promotion of Christianity. Among those whom the apostle converted, was a man named Onesimus, who had absconded from his master with effects to a considerable amount. After the conversion of this man, St. Paul sent him back to his master, with a letter†, enjoining him to pardon this reclaimed sinner, and treat him with kindness.

Being informed of the imprisonment of St. Paul, the Christians of Philippi made a contribution for his relief, and sent the money by Epaphroditus their bishop, by whom the apostle sent back an epistle, instructing them in the rules of religious and moral duty. Availing himself of the opportunity of the departure of Tychicus, St. Paul sent by him his epistle to the Ephesians; and about this time he wrote his epistle to the Colossians. By what means St. Paul obtained his freedom, is a matter of uncertainty; but before his departure from Italy, he wrote his epistle to the Hebrews‡.

Accompanied

* *Vipera, quasi Viviparus* (a sort of serpent, so called because it brings forth its young alive), is but a small creature (the largest being not above half an ell long, and an inch thick), but so very poisonous, that the bite of it will sometimes kill a person in a moment, or cause a sudden inflammation all the body over, as the people of Malta we see expected of St. Paul, Acts xxviii. 6. The people of that island, however, have a tradition, that, ever since the time that the apostle was bitten by one, whatever vipers are found there, have no venom in them; and that some of them, when carried into Sicily, become as poisonous as others; but when brought back to Malta, again lose all their venomous quality. Nay, they add farther, that as there are great numbers of petrified vipers, and other serpents in this island, they who carry pieces of these about them, will be preserved from the biting of any venomous animal; and that others, who, for want of them, chance to be bit, may certainly be cured, by taking some of the powder of one of the petrefactions mingled in a little water.

† This epistle may pass for a master-piece of eloquence in the persuasive way. For therein the apostle has recourse to all the considerations which friendship, religion, piety, and tenderness can inspire, to reconcile a servant to his master: and yet some of the ancients were of opinion that it did not deserve a place in the canon of Scripture, because it was written on a particular occasion, and with a design not so much to instruct Christians in general, as to recommend a fugitive servant. But though the subject of this epistle be a private affair, yet it contains such general instructions as these: First, that no Christian, though of the meanest condition, is to be contemned. Secondly, That Christianity does not impair the power of masters over their servants. Thirdly, That servants ought to make satisfaction for any wrong or injury done to their masters. Fourthly, That masters ought to be reconciled to their servants, upon their repentance and acknowledgment of their faults: And, Fifthly, That there is at all times a love and affection due from a master to a profitable servant. And who then (say the Greek interpreters) would refuse to number an epistle so profitable and so instructive with the rest of St. Paul's works?

‡ That this epistle was of antient date, and written before the destruction of the temple, and the abolition of the Jewish worship, is manifest from the author's making no mention of these events, which, had they been passed, he would not have omitted, as being one of the best arguments, that could be produced, for the support of his main doctrine, the abrogation of the Levitical sacrifices and priesthood; nor could we find it quoted so frequently in St. Clement's letter to the Corinthians, which seems to have been written before the downfall of Jerusalem, had it not been of a date prior to that time. It is not to be questioned, then, but that this epistle to the Hebrews was extant in the apostolic age, but who its author was, we find both ancients and moderns in great dispute. Some ascribed it to St. Barnabas, others to Clemens Romanus, others to St. Luke, and others again to Apollos, who in the sacred history is styled "an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures," Acts xviii. 24. If, however, we look into the epistle itself, we shall find that the characters can agree with none so well as St. Paul: for, as it appears that this epistle was in being before the destruction of Jerusalem, and while the Jews had power enough to oppress the Christians in Judæa; that the person who wrote it was well versed in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and the most abstruse parts of Jewish theology; that he represents himself as lately in prison, but at that time set at liberty, and hoping speedily to come and see them; that he mentions Timothy, whom he calls his brother, as being likewise released, and ready to accompany him in his journey, ch. xiii. 23. that he commends those to whom he writes, for "having had compassion of him in his bonds, and taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods," ch. x. 34. that he requests them to "pray for him, that he might be restored to them sooner," ch. xiii. 18, 19. and lastly, that this epistle was written from Rome, as some manuscripts have it, or from Italy, as we find it in others; we cannot but allow, that each of these

Accompanied by Timothy, St. Paul now travelled into Spain; and, according to the testimony of several respectable writers, he crossed the sea, and preached the gospel in Britain. After remaining eight or nine months in these western parts, St. Paul returned to the east; and after visiting Sicily, Greece, and Crete, he repaired to Rome, where he met with Peter, and was together with that apostle cast into prison, in the general persecution of the Christians, on pretence of their having set fire to the city. How long he remained in confinement, and whether he was scourged previous to his execution, we are not informed: but, pleading the privilege of a Roman citizen, he was sentenced to be beheaded.

St. Paul suffered at the Aquæ Salviæ, three miles from Rome, and was buried in the Via Ostiensis, about two miles from the capital. About the year 317, Constantine the Great, at the instance of Pope Sylvester, erected a superb church on the spot where the remains of this apostle were deposited.

THE LIFE OF ST. ANDREW.

TRANSACTIONS, FROM HIS BIRTH TILL OUR LORD'S ASCENSION, AND HIS OWN MARTYRDOM.

ST. Andrew was a native of Bethsaida, a city in Galilee, son of John or Jonas, a fisherman, and brother of Simon Peter, but whether older or younger is uncertain; though it is most generally intimated by the ancients, that he was the younger. He was brought up to his father's profession, at which he continued to labour till our blessed Saviour elected him into the apostolical office. Andrew was one of the disciples of John the Baptist, who, when Christ appeared in the country beyond the Jordan, pointed out the Saviour of mankind, styling him, "the Lamb of God;" and following him to his place of abode, Andrew conversed with Jesus, to whom he shortly after introduced his brother Simon. After remaining a short time with our blessed Redeemer, they returned to their usual occupation.

Something more than a year after this, our Saviour perceived Andrew and Peter fishing in the sea of Galilee, and by his divine power he enabled them to obtain a miraculous draught of fishes; after which he commanded them to follow him.

After the descent of the Holy Ghost, St. Andrew is recorded by the generality of ancient writers to have been chosen to proclaim the gospel in Scythia, and the adjacent countries; and this office he executed with great success, though he was furiously opposed by the malicious Jews.

In the city of Sinope, situated in the Euxine Sea, St. Andrew met his brother Peter, who remained there with him a considerable time. The inhabitants of Sinope engaged in a confederacy against Andrew, and determined to burn the house where he resided: but being disappointed in this, they beat him with clubs, cast stones at him, and otherwise treated him with the most savage barbarity, till they supposed that they had entirely deprived him of life. But he recovered, and returned publicly into the city, and reclaimed a great number of the Jews to the religion of the blessed Jesus.

From Sinope St. Andrew returned to Jerusalem, but he remained only a short time in this city. He travelled over Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, Achaia, and Epirus, zealously preaching the religion of Christ, and confirming his doctrine by miracles and wonderful

these is a strong argument that this epistle was written by St. Paul, because they accord so exactly with his circumstances, at this time, above any one's else. But then, if we add to this the testimony of the ancients, especially of St. Peter, who in his second epistle to the Jewish converts, mentions a certain letter, which St. Paul had written to them, distinct from all his other epistolary writings, ch. iii. 15, 16. and can be no other than that which bears the name of "the Epistle to the Hebrews," we can no longer doubt of its being the composition of St. Paul; and an original composition too, since it has in it none of that constraint which is visible in a translation, nor any of those Hebrew phrases which occur so frequently in the version of the Septuagint.

signs.

signs. At length he arrived at Patrea, a city of Achaia, where he surrendered up his life upon the cross, thereby affording his greatest testimony in defence of the religion of his divine Master.

Ægenas, the proconsul of Achaia, came at this time to Patrea, and had recourse to every method of force and persuasion, for reducing the people to their former idolatrous mode of worship. But the apostle still persevered in the discharge of the duties of his ministry, and even ventured to expostulate with the proconsul; who being highly exasperated against him, sentenced him first to be scourged, and then to be put to death.

Several lictors successively scourged the body of St. Andrew, whose constancy, patience, and fortitude under his sufferings, so provoked Ægenas, that he ordered him to be crucified; and, that his sufferings might be of longer continuance, he commanded him to be fastened to the cross by means of ropes instead of nails. Upon his arrival at the place of execution, the apostle fervently addressed himself in prayer to the throne of grace, and exhorted the people to persevere in the faith which he had recommended to them. Being fastened to the cross, he remained in that situation two whole days; during which, he continued to instruct the people in the principles of the gospel. At length he supplicated the Almighty, that he might seal the truth of his religion with his blood. His prayers were heard, and he immediately expired. The death of this faithful minister of Christ happened on the last day of November; but in what year, cannot be precisely ascertained.

The body of St. Andrew was honourably interred by Maximilia, a lady of distinction, and who, according to Nicephorus, was wife to the proconsul. Constantine the Great removed the body of St. Andrew to Constantinople, and deposited it in the superb church which he had erected in honour of the apostles. When this church was taken down by the order of the emperor Justinian, in order to its being rebuilt, the body of St. Andrew was found in a wooden coffin, and again deposited in the proper place.

THE LIFE OF ST. JAMES THE GREAT.

PARTICULARS CONCERNING HIM, TILL THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST, AND SEALING THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL WITH HIS BLOOD.

IN order to distinguish him from another of the same name, this apostle was called James the Great. He was the son of Zebedee, and by trade a fisherman; in which occupation both he and his brother were employed, when the Saviour of the world called them to be his disciples. Soon after this, he was exalted from the station of an ordinary disciple, to the exercise of the apostolical duties. He was also honoured with some peculiar instances of the favour of Jesus Christ, being one of the three chosen to attend his Master, when he restored the daughter of Jairus to life; he was also permitted to be present on occasion of the glorious transfiguration, and of the agony of Christ. Upon the calling of the three select apostles, our Lord gave them each a new title; calling Simon by the name of Peter, or a rock, and James and John, who were brothers, Boanerges, or the sons of thunder.

Some imagine that this appellation was given them on account of the bold and vehement manner in which they would proclaim the gospel; and others are of opinion, that the name was meant to signify that they would proclaim the great mysteries of the gospel in a more profound and lofty strain than the other apostles. However this may be, by this term our Lord seems to allude to the resolute disposition of the brothers, who were of a more fiery temper than the rest of the apostles. When our Saviour sent some of his disciples to make preparations for his reception at Jerusalem, upon the arrival of these disciples in Samaria, they were treated with great severity by the inhabitants. This was so highly resented by James and his brother, that they applied to Jesus, desiring to

know, whether he would not imitate the conduct of Elias, by calling down fire from heaven to consume these inhospitable and degenerate people. But the holy Jesus informed them, that he came not to destroy, but to effect the salvation of mankind.

According to Sophronius, St. James preached to the dispersed Jews, after the ascension of our blessed Saviour. Herod fomented a violent persecution of the Christians, and, during the continuance thereof, he pronounced sentence of death upon St. James.

As the apostle was conducting to the place of execution, the man who had given evidence against him, being converted by the remarkable courage and constancy which he displayed during his trial, prostrated himself at the feet of the apostle, and supplicated forgiveness for the accusation he had exhibited against him. The apostle tenderly embraced the man, saying, "Peace, my son, peace be to thee, and the pardon of thy faults." These words were no sooner pronounced, than the convert publicly proclaimed himself to be a Christian, and St. James and this man were beheaded at the same time. Thus fell the apostle St. James, the proto-martyr, by cheerfully drinking of that cup, of which he long before assured his Saviour that he was willing to partake.

THE LIFE OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

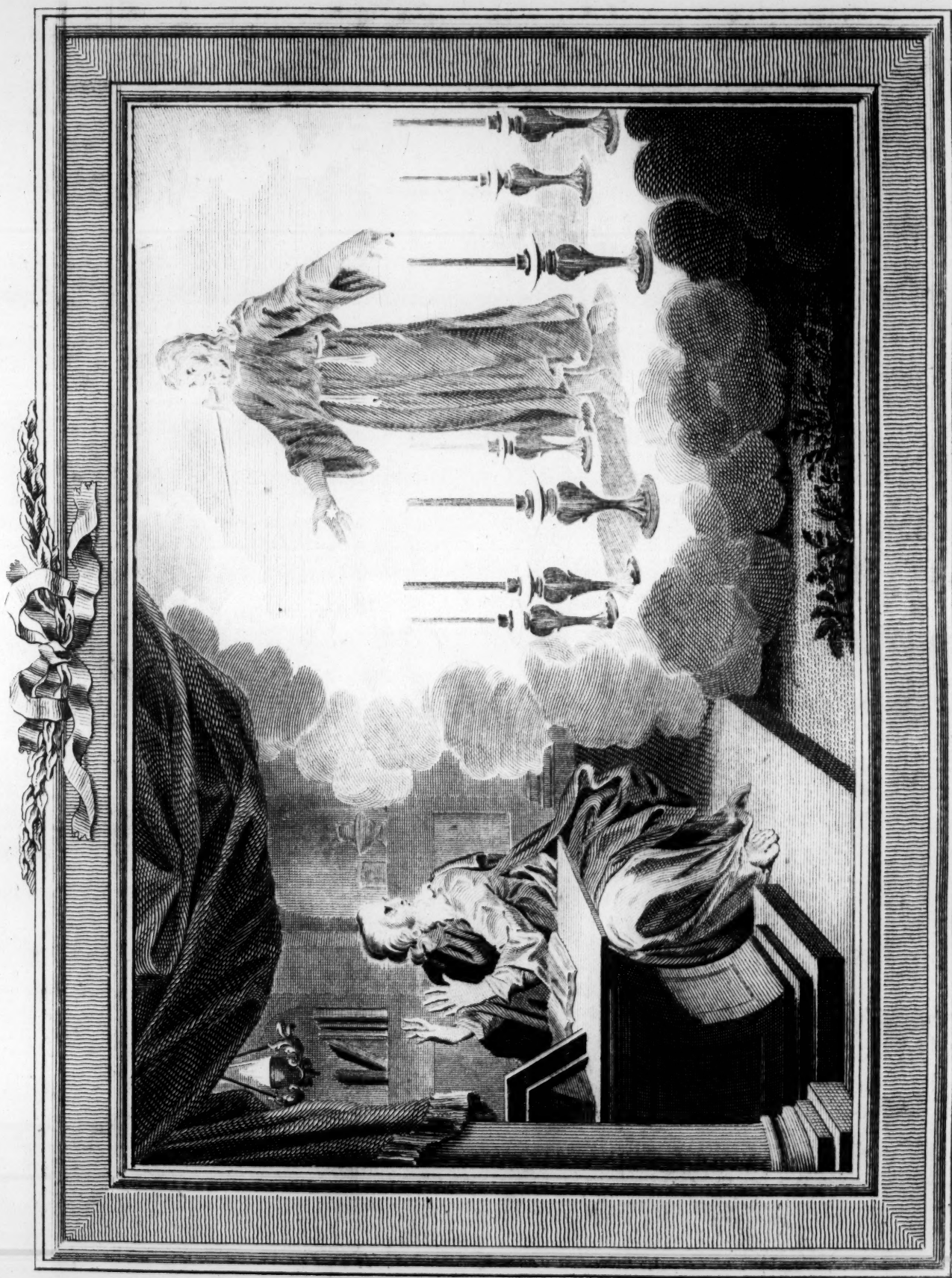
TRANSACTIONS OF THIS BELOVED APOSTLE, TILL THE ASCENSION OF HIS DEAR LORD AND SAVIOUR, AND FROM THENCE TO HIS OWN DEATH.

THIS evangelist, of whose descent we have already given an account, was probably a follower of John the Baptist; and upon hearing him pronounce Jesus to be the "Lamb of God," he followed the Saviour of the world to the place of his abode. He was the youngest of the apostles: but yet he was peculiarly honoured by his divine Master, being present at the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus, the transfiguration of our Saviour, and the agony he endured in the garden.

When our Saviour was apprehended in the garden of Gethsemane, he was deserted by St. John; who, however, soon repented of his pusillanimity, and, going in search of Jesus, entered the hall of the high-priest; and from this time he steadily adhered to him, and, attending him at the time of his crucifixion, resolutely avowed his faith, amidst a numerous body of armed soldiers, and an immense concourse of their most inveterate enemies. With his dying breath, our Saviour recommended his disconsolate mother to the protection of St. John.

St. John resided principally in Jerusalem till the decease of the Virgin Mary, which happened about ten years after our Saviour's ascension. After this event, he retired into Asia, and applied himself with unremitting assiduity to the propagation of the Christian religion. He founded churches at Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and many other places; but he most generally resided at Ephesus, where St. Paul had many years before established a church. After residing several years at Ephesus, St. John was accused before the emperor Domitian, of being a public subverter of the established religion of the empire. Being conveyed in chains to Rome, by the decree of this barbarous prince, St. John was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil: but the Almighty was graciously pleased to rescue him from this apparently unavoidable destruction. This miraculous deliverance, however, was not sufficient to convince the emperor of the divinity of the commission of St. John, or to abate the furious enmity he had conceived against him. He condemned John to banishment in the island of Patmos, situated in the Archipelago, where he resided several years, diligently employed in teaching the poor and ignorant inhabitants the principles of the Gospel; and towards the conclusion of the reign of Domitian, he wrote his book of Revelation.

Upon the decease of Nero, and the succession of Nerva, John returned into Asia, and established his residence at Ephesus, where the people had lately consigned Timothy their
bishop



The VISION of ST. JOHN.

Burdett, Sc.



bishop to martyrdom. In conjunction with seven other bishops, St. John now assumed the government of the extensive diocese of Asia Minor, and disposed of the clergy in the most advantageous manner that the circumstances of the times would admit. With unceasing industry, he continued to cultivate the Christian religion, till death put a period to all his toils and sufferings. St. John died in the beginning of the reign of Trajan, being then in the ninety-eighth year of his age; and, according to Eusebius, he was buried in the neighbourhood of Ephesus.

THE LIFE OF ST. PHILIP.

GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS CALL, LABOURS, TRAVELS, AND MARTYRDOM.

ST. Philip had the distinguished honour of being the first called to be a disciple of the blessed Jesus; he was a native of Bethsaida, "the city of Andrew and Peter." Soon after our Saviour's temptation in the wilderness, he met Andrew and his brother Peter, and, after some discourse, parted from them. On the following day, as he was passing through Galilee, he met with Philip, whom he commanded to follow him, that being the mode he constantly adopted in calling his disciples. Though the brethren above-mentioned first conversed with the Saviour of the world, they immediately returned to their usual occupation, and were not called to be disciples till a year after. Immediately after being appointed to attend our Saviour, Philip communicated the glad tidings of the appearance of the Messiah to his brother Nathaniel, whom he introduced to our Saviour.

When our Lord was fortifying the minds of his disciples against his departure, he informed them, that he was going to make preparations for their reception in the mansions of the heavenly Canaan; saying, at the same time, that he was "the way, the truth, and the life;" that "no man could come to the Father, but by him; and that knowing him, they both knew, and had seen the Father." Not understanding these words, Philip requested, that Jesus would shew him and his brethren the Father. Hereupon our Lord mildly rebuked him for his ignorance in not knowing, after the information he had received, that he was himself the image of his Father, by whose divine pleasure all his actions were regulated and performed.

We are informed by ancient writers, that, in the distribution made by the apostles of the several regions of the globe, where they were respectively to propagate the Gospel, the Upper Asia fell to the lot of St. Philip; and in that country, he discharged the duties of his ministry with remarkable industry, and correspondent success. He established divers churches, and confirmed the faith of those whom he converted by a great variety of miracles.

Upon his arrival at Hierapolis in Phrygia, St. Philip was greatly afflicted, upon finding the people most abominably addicted to idolatrous practices. The principal object of the worship of these superstitious people, was an enormous serpent; and, by his fervent and continued prayers to heaven, he procured the destruction of this idol, or, at least, caused it to be removed from the temple, and the adoration that had been long paid to it consequently to be discontinued. Having thus destroyed their deity, he explained to the multitude the great mysteries of the Gospel dispensation; and this discourse prevailed upon great numbers of the people to embrace the Gospel of Jesus. But the magistrates of the city, being highly exasperated against Philip, on account of the great number of people whom he daily converted from the practice of idolatrous worship, they seized him, and caused him to be scourged. After this, he was led to execution; and, according to some writers, hanged against a pillar, or, as others assert, crucified. The body of this apostle was taken down by St. Bartholomew, his fellow-labourer in the vineyard of Christ, and Mariamne, St. Philip's sister, who caused it to be buried with the usual solemnities.

THE LIFE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

HIS NAME, APPOINTMENT TO THE APOSTLESHIP, TRAVELS, LABOURS, AND MARTYRDOM.

THIS apostle is mentioned as one of the twelve disciples of Christ, under the name of Bartholomew; but it is evident from many passages of scripture, that he was also called Nathaniel; and St. John expressly says, that he was a native of Cana in Galilee.

Being informed by Philip that he had seen the long-expected Messiah, whose appearance had been so frequently predicted by Moses and the other prophets, Bartholomew said, that the Messiah could not be a native of Nazareth, as Philip had described: but in reply, Philip requested that he would accompany him to Jesus, and receive satisfaction of the truth of what he had asserted. Upon his approaching, he was saluted with the honourable character of being "an Israelite in whom was no guile." This salutation greatly surprised him, as he supposed himself to be an intire stranger to him: but our Lord informed him, that he had seen him while he remained under a fig-tree at some distance, before being called by Philip. Thus convinced, he acknowledged Jesus to be the promised Messiah, and the only Son of God. Hereupon our Saviour said, that since from the above instance he believed him to be the Messiah, he should in future receive more powerful testimonies in confirmation of his faith; for he should behold the heavens open to receive him, and the celestial hosts of immortal spirits attending his triumphant entry into the blessed regions of his heavenly Father. After the ascension of the holy Jesus, St. Bartholomew travelled to different parts, for the purpose of promulgating the Gospel.

Concerning our apostle's travels up and down the world to propagate the Christian faith, we shall present the reader with a brief account, though we cannot warrant the exact order of the narrative. That he went as far as India, is owned by all, which surely is meant of the Hither India, or that part of it lying next to Asia. Socrates tells us, it was the India bordering upon Æthiopia, meaning no doubt the Asian Æthiopia; Sophronius calls it the Fortunate India, and tells us, that here he left behind him St. Matthew's Gospel, whereof Eusebius gives a more particular relation: that when Pantæus, a man famous for his skill in philosophy, and especially the institutions of the stoics, but much more for his hearty affection to christianity, in a devout and zealous imitation of the apostles, was inflamed with a desire to propagate the Christian religion among the eastern countries, he came as far as India itself. Here amongst some that yet retained the knowledge of Christ, he found St. Matthew's Gospel written in Hebrew, left here (as the tradition was) by St. Bartholomew, one of the twelve apostles, when he preached the Gospel to these nations.

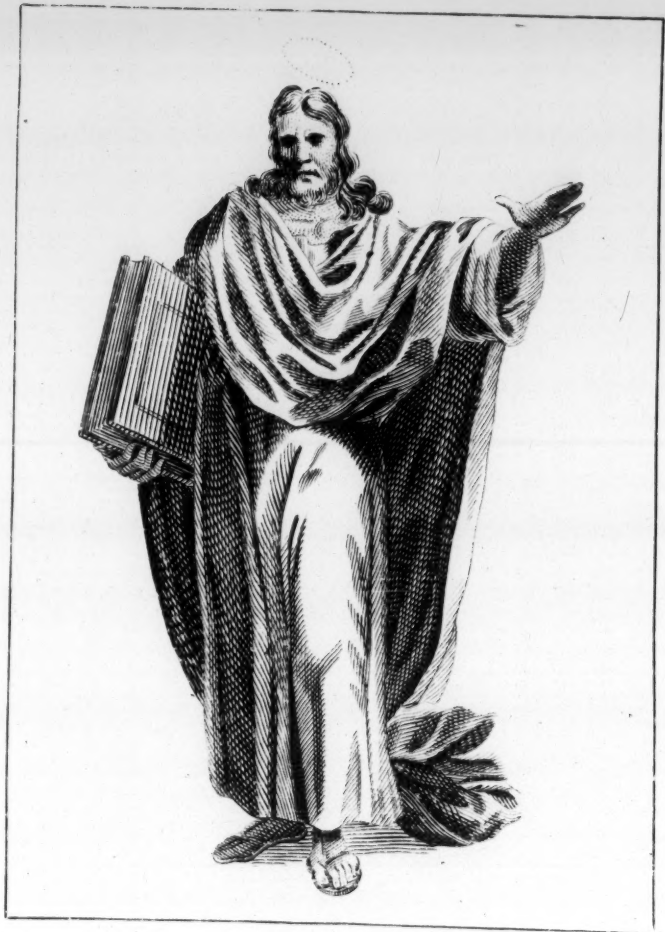
After his labours in these parts of the world, he returned to the more western and northern parts of Asia. At Hierapolis in Phrygia we find him in company with St. Philip, instructing that place in the principles of christianity, and convincing them of the folly of their blind idolatries. Here, by the enraged magistrates, he was, at the same time with Philip, designed for martyrdom; in order whereunto he was fastened upon the cross, with an intent to dispatch him: but upon a sudden conviction that the Divine Justice would revenge their death, he was taken down again and dismissed. Hence probably he went into Lycaonia, the people whereof, Chrysostom assures us, he instructed and trained up in the Christian discipline. His last remove was to Albanople, in Armenia the Great (the same no doubt which Nicephorus calls Urbanople, a city of Cilicia), a place miserably overgrown with idolatry; from which while he sought to reclaim the people, he was, by the governor of the place, commanded to be crucified, which he cheerfully underwent, comforting and confirming the convert Gentiles to the last minute of his life. Some add, that he was crucified with his head downwards; others, that he was flayed, and his skin first taken off, which might consist well enough with his crucifixion, excoriation being a punishment in use not only in Egypt, but amongst the Persians, next neighbours to these Armenians (as Ammianus Marcellinus assures us, and Plutarch records a particular instance of Mesabates the Persian eunuch being first flayed alive, and then crucified), from whom they

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ST. MATTHEW.



ST. MARK.



ST. LUKE.



ST. JOHN.

they might easily borrow this piece of barbarous and savage cruelty. As for the several stages to which his body was removed after his death, first to Daras, a city on the borders of Persia, then to Liparis, one of the Æolian islands, thence to Beneventum in Italy, and last of all to Rome, they that are fond of those things, and have better leisure, may inquire. Heretics persecuted his memory after death, no less than Heathens did his person while alive, by forging and fathering a fabulous Gospel upon his name, which, together with others of like stamp, Gelasius bishop of Rome justly branded as apocryphal, altogether unworthy the name and patronage of an apostle.

THE LIFE OF ST. MATTHEW THE EVANGELIST.

CONVERSION, TRAVELS, ACCOUNT OF HIS GOSPEL, &c.

ST. Matthew, who was also called Levi, though a Hebrew, and probably a native of Galilee, held an office under the Roman government, being a publican or tax-gatherer. This evangelist appears to have been collector of the duties upon such merchandizes as came by the sea of Galilee, and the toll of passengers by water. His office or custom-house was at Capernaum, the usual place of our Saviour's abode. As Jesus was going out of the city of Capernaum, to walk by the side of the sea, he perceived Matthew sitting in his office, and said to him, "Follow me. And he arose, and followed him." Matthew was in opulent circumstances, and had a lucrative employment: but he not only relinquished his possessions, but also hazarded incurring the displeasure of his superiors in office, for so abruptly deserting the business which they had entrusted to his care.

The Pharisees, who were accustomed to avail themselves of every opportunity of endeavouring to bring the doctrines of our blessed Saviour into disrepute, informed some of the disciples of our Lord, that they conceived their Master's familiarity with publicans and sinners to be extremely inconsistent with that purity and holiness of character to which he pretended. Thus was our Saviour censured, in consequence of his having accepted an invitation from Matthew to partake of an entertainment, where the guests were composed almost intirely of publicans: but he informed these people, that though the persons with whom he had associated were infamous to a proverb, yet the circumstance of his joining the company could not justly subject him to reproach; for his motive was not either to encourage or countenance their iniquitous proceedings, but to convince them of the necessity of reforming their lives, as the only means of effectually providing for their eternal salvation.

After his conversion, Matthew did not return to his former employment of a publican, although St. Peter, and some other of the apostles, re-assumed the profession of fishermen, after the resurrection of our Saviour. On this head, St. Gregory observes, that some callings are in themselves innocent, and that there are others which can scarcely be exercised without sin. The corrupt, insolent, and covetous practices of the publicans, had brought the characters of those officers into universal detestation; and had Matthew returned to his former profession, he would have been in danger of yielding to those temptations to which he must have been perpetually exposed.

During the first eight years after the ascension of our blessed Saviour, St. Matthew continued to preach the Gospel in various parts of Judæa: but after that period, he departed from the country of Palestine, in order to explain the principles of christianity to the Gentiles. There is nothing of certainty as to the course St. Matthew pursued in his travels, though the province which claimed his peculiar attention is said to have been the Asiatic Æthiopia.

Before leaving Judæa, at the instance of the Jewish converts, he wrote his history of the life and transactions of the blessed Jesus, and left it among them, as the standing record of

of what he had preached. The gospel of St. Matthew was written before that of either of the other three evangelists; and for this reason it takes the first place in the canon of the New Testament. Nicephorus is of opinion that this gospel was written fifteen years after the ascension of our blessed Saviour; and Irenæus supposes it to have been produced at a much later period. It must, however, have been extant previous to the dispersion of the apostles; for St. Bartholomew took it with him into India, and left it in that country. The ancients concur in opinion that this work was originally written in Hebrew; and this, indeed, is very probable, since it was intended by the author for the use of those who had been born and bred in Judæa and Jerusalem; and therefore it is reasonable to suppose that he wrote to them in their mother-tongue. Being translated into Greek, this version received the unanimous approbation of the apostles, and consequently obtained equal authority with the original. By whom this gospel was translated, is uncertain. Athanasius, in his Synopsis, ascribes the work to St. James the Less; Anastasius attributes it to St. Paul and St. Luke; and others say it was written by St. John. There is no certainty as to what became of the original Hebrew, or whether that copy of it which Pantænus is said to have brought from the Indies was deposited in the city of Alexandria, and there kept till the time of St. Jerom, who avers that he perused it.

Little certainty can be had what travels St. Matthew underwent for the advancement of the Christian faith; so irrecoverably is truth lost in a crowd of legendary stories. Ethiopia is generally assigned as the province of his apostolical ministry. Metaphrastes tells us, that he went first into Parthia, and having successfully planted christianity in those parts, thence travelled into Æthiopia, that is, the Asiatic Æthiopia, lying near to India: here, by preaching and miracles, he mightily triumphed over errors and idolatry, convinced and converted multitudes, ordained spiritual guides and pastors to confirm and build them up, and bring over others to the faith, and then finished his own course. As for what is related by Nicephorus, of his going into the country of the Cannibals, constituting Plato, one of his followers, bishop of Myrmæna; of Christ's appearing to him in the form of a beautiful youth, and giving him a wand, which he pitching into the ground, immediately it grew up into a tree: of his strange converting the prince of that country, of his numerous miracles, peaceable death, and sumptuous funerals, with abundance more of the same stamp and coin, they are justly to be reckoned amongst those fabulous reports which have no pillar or ground either of truth or probability to support them. Most probable it is (what an ancient writer affirms) that he suffered martyrdom at Naddaber, a city in Æthiopia; but by what kind of death is altogether uncertain. Whether this Naddaber be the same with Beschberi, where the Arabic writer of his life affirms him to have suffered martyrdom, let others inquire: he also adds, that he was buried at Arthagānetu Cæsarea, but where that is, is to us unknown. Dorotheus makes him honourably buried at Hierapolis in Parthia, one of the first places to which he preached the Gospel.

THE LIFE OF ST. THOMAS.

HIS DOUBLE NAME EXPLAINED; ALSO HIS TRAVELS, LABOURS IN THE MINISTRY, AND MARTYRDOM.

IN the evangelical history, we have no account either of the country or kindred of St. Thomas: but from circumstances we may pretty safely conclude, that he was a Jew, and, in all probability, a native of Galilee. Learned men concur in giving the following reason for St. Thomas being called Didymus: when the Jews travelled into foreign countries, or were accustomed to converse familiarly with Greeks or Romans, they assumed to themselves Greek and Latin names, bearing an affinity to, or, perhaps, being synonymous with those given them by their parents. Thus Thomas, a Syriac name denoting a twin, was explained by Didymus, which has the same import in the Greek.

Soon

Soon after, being appointed to the exercise of the apostolical duties, St. Thomas afforded an eminent instance of his willingness to encounter the utmost danger and difficulty, rather than abandon the righteous cause of his great Lord and Master. When the rest of the apostles were endeavouring to dissuade Jesus from going into Judæa, on account of the decease of Lazarus, and were greatly troubled, lest he should be stoned by the multitude, finding their arguments would prove ineffectual, Thomas said, "Let us go, that we may die with him;" for he concluded, that, instead of restoring Lazarus to life, he would himself submit to the power of death, through the fury of the populace. When the holy Jesus, a short time previous to his sufferings, was speaking to his apostles concerning the joys of heaven, informing them that he was about to depart, in order to prepare for their receptions in the regions of eternal bliss; adding, that they might follow him, and that they knew both where he was going, and the way thither; St. Thomas replied, that they knew not where he was going, and were equally ignorant as to the way leading to the place to which he had alluded. Hereupon our Lord emphatically replied, "I am the way;" thereby intimating, that God had sent him to instruct mankind in the means of obtaining eternal life, and to open the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

On the day of the resurrection of our blessed Redeemer, he came to the house where a number of his disciples were assembled: but at this meeting, Thomas was not present, having, it is probable, not joined his brethren since their dispersion in the garden, when the apprehension of danger induced each of them to consult his particular personal safety. Upon being informed by his brethren, that their Master had appeared to them, he refused to yield credit to their assertion; saying, that what they had mistaken for their Master, must have been a spectre or apparition; which opinion, had he been present, he would have retained, unless convinced of the identity of the person of his Master, by the prints of the nails, and the wounds in his hands and side.

Notwithstanding this infidelity in suspending his faith of those facts which the ancient prophets had expressly foretold, which Christ himself had inculcated in his discourses, and which the other apostles had attested, with infinite condescension our blessed Redeemer again presented himself, when Thomas and his brethren were assembled; and, after the usual salutation of "Peace be unto you," he turned to Thomas, commanding him to reach forth his hand, and put it to his side, and his finger into the prints of the nails." Thomas obeyed, and, being convinced of his error, exclaimed, "My Lord, and my God!" thus acknowledging that Jesus had proved himself omnipotent, in subduing the power of death; and omniscient, in being sensible of the scruples* he had entertained. Our Saviour now observed, that it was happy for him that he believed on the evidence of his senses; adding, however, that he would have been more commendable, had he believed without such evidence, since he was not unacquainted with the several predictions, purporting that the Son of God would rise from the dead.

After the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost, which, according to his promise, our blessed Redeemer poured upon his apostles, St. Thomas and his brethren preached the gospel in different parts of Judæa; and after the dispersion of the Christian church in Jerusalem, Thomas repaired into Parthia, the province wherein he was appointed to discharge the duties of his holy ministration. After this, he preached to the Medes, Persians, Caramanians, Hyrcanians, Bactrians, and the neighbouring nations. During his residence in Persia, he is said to have met with the magi, or wise men, who, upon hearing of the birth of Christ, had travelled through a great extent of country, in order to pay their adorations to him; and after baptizing these people, he admitted them among the number of his followers, employing them as his assistants in propagating the doctrines of Christianity.

Passing through Persia and Ethiopia, St. Thomas travelled into the Indies. When the Portuguese first visited India, after their discovery of a passage by the Cape of Good

* By this doubting of Thomas, we are more confirmed, than by the faith of the other apostles; for this circumstance was productive of an incontrovertible proof, that the very body in which our Lord suffered upon the cross, was restored to life.

Hope, they collected several particulars concerning St. Thomas; partly from ancient monuments, and partly from uncontroverted traditions, which had been preserved by the Christians. The substance of these particulars is, that St. Thomas arrived at Socotora, an island in the Arabian sea; from whence he proceeded to Cranganor, where having gained many converts, he travelled farther into the east. Having successfully preached the Gospel, he returned into the kingdom of Coromandel; and at Malipur, the metropolis, situated in the neighbourhood of the mouth of the Ganges, he began to erect a place for divine worship: but this work was interrupted by the idolatrous priests, and Sagamo, the prince of the country. The apostle, however, performed several miracles, and with such effect, that he was permitted to proceed in his undertaking; and Sagamo himself being converted to Christianity, a great number of his subjects followed the example of their prince. According to St. Chrysostom, St. Thomas, who was originally the most incredulous and weak of the apostles, became, through the condescension of Christ in satisfying his scruples, the most active and invincible of the whole number; travelling over a great part of the globe, and preaching the gospel to ignorant and barbarous nations, with unremitting zeal and fortitude.

From the great success of the gospel, the Brachmans, dreading that their own religion would be extirpated, were extremely exasperated against St. Thomas; and knowing that he was accustomed to retire to a tomb at a small distance from the city, for the exercise of private devotion, they resolved that this place should be the scene of the sanguinary designs which they had projected against the apostle. While he was fervently praying to the Lord, the Brachmans, attended by a number of armed followers, surprised the apostle in his retirement; and having discharged against him a shower of darts, one of the priests run him through the body with a lance.

The body of St. Thomas was interred by his disciples in the church which he had lately constructed, and which was afterwards improved into a magnificent structure.

THE LIFE OF ST. JAMES THE LESS.

HIS TRANSACTIONS, LABOURS IN THE GOSPEL, AND DEATH.

IT may be reasonably conjectured, that St. James the Less was the son of Joseph, afterwards the husband of Mary, by his first wife, whom St. Jerom styles Escha; adding, that she was the daughter of Aggi, brother to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. Hence he was reputed to be the brother of our blessed Saviour. In the evangelical writings, we indeed find, that several persons are mentioned as the brethren of our Lord: but in what sense, was greatly controverted by the ancients. St. Jerom, St. Chrysostom, and some others, assert them to have been so denominated from their being the sons of Mary, cousin-german, or, according to the Hebrew idiom, sister to the Virgin Mary. But Eusebius, Epiphanius, and others say, that they were the children of Joseph by a former wife: and this seems best to accord with what the evangelist says. "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren James and Joses, Simeon and Judas? and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man these things?" Hence it appears, that the Jews understood these persons to be not only Christ's kinsmen, but his brethren.

After the resurrection, St. James the Less was honoured with a particular appearance of our Lord; and this circumstance, though not mentioned by the evangelists, is recorded by St. Paul. Some time after our Saviour had appeared to James, he was constituted bishop of Jerusalem, being advanced beyond his brethren on account of his relationship to Christ; and for this reason, Simeon was elected to succeed him; for after James, he was the next kinsman to our Saviour; a consideration which induced Peter, and the

two sons of Zebedee, though they had been greatly honoured by our Lord, to decline contending for that high office.

After the conversion of St. Paul, upon his coming to Jerusalem, he applied to James, who honoured him with the right hand of fellowship. Peter sent news of his miraculous deliverance from prison to St. James: "Go, shew these things unto James, and to the brethren." Thus he commanded that the intelligence should be communicated to the brethren in general, but particularly to James, who was the pastor of the church.

St. James was remarkably diligent in the discharge of the duties of his sacred office, and his preaching was attended with proportionate success. His zeal and industry rendered him a particular object of the rage of the enemies of the Gospel, whom he had thus described: "They please not God, and are contrary to all men." Provoked in consequence of St. Paul having escaped the effects of their fury, by making an appeal to Cæsar, they directed their wrath against St. James: but being unable to effect their cruel design during the government of Festus, they resolved to attempt it under the procuratorship of Albinus, his successor, Ananus the younger, of the Sadducees, being then high-priest.

In pursuance of their iniquitous design, a council was summoned for the purpose of examining St. James, whom this assembly condemned as a violator of the law. But lest the people should be enraged, and a popular tumult ensue, the scribes and Pharisees endeavoured to ensnare the apostle, insidiously informing him, that they had reposed an implicit confidence in him, and that the whole Jewish nation ascribed to him the title of a just man: and they requested that he would avail himself of the opportunity afforded by the great number of people assembled on occasion of the paschal solemnity, of correcting the erroneous opinions they had imbibed respecting Jesus: adding, that if he would publicly disclaim his being the Messiah, they would accompany him to the top of the temple, whence his proclamation might be heard by the multitude.

The apostle said he would accept their proposal, of addressing the people from the top of the temple; and being stationed on one of the pinnacles, the scribes and Pharisees demanded that he would declare his sentiments concerning the crucified Jesus. Hereupon St. James said, in an audible voice, "Why do you inquire of Jesus, the Son of man? He sits in heaven, at the right-hand of the Majesty on high, and will come again in the clouds of heaven." Hearing this declaration, the multitude exclaimed, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

Thus disappointed, and knowing that the measures they had pursued could not fail more strongly to confirm the people in their belief of the Gospel, they determined to put James to instant death, that the fate of this apostle might deter others from acknowledging Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. They accordingly cried out, that Justus himself was seduced and become an impostor, and immediately precipitated him from the pinnacle whereon he stood into the court below. Notwithstanding the violence of the fall, this holy man was so far recovered as to be able to rise on his knees, and fervently pray to Heaven in behalf of his murderers. But his cruel and unrelenting enemies cast a great number of weighty stones at him, even at the very time when he was benevolently supplicating the Almighty to pardon their iniquities: but one of the multitude, more merciful than his associates, released him from his sufferings, by putting a period to his life with a fuller's club. Thus fell this righteous man, in the ninety-sixth year of his age, and about twenty-four years after the glorious ascension of our blessed Saviour. His death was severely lamented by all the members of the Christian church, and even, as Josephus acknowledges, by the most just and sober people of the Jewish nation. St. James the Less was a man of exemplary piety and virtue, and of such unblemished integrity, that he obtained the honour of being surnamed the Just by his countrymen. He was a man of such abstracted piety, as intirely to neglect his person, that his religious duties might not suffer interruption. He always lived in a state of celibacy, and neither ate flesh nor drank wine, nor any other kind of strong liquor: he only clothed himself in linen, and neither anointed, bathed, nor shaved his head, to which the inhabitants of the eastern countries were accustomed. He frequently retired into the temple, and there continued alone, earnestly

supplicating the Almighty to pardon the sins of mankind. He was so constantly employed in prayer, that, as we are assured by Eusebius, the skin of his knees was as hard as the hide of a camel.

St. James wrote only one *epistle*, and that probably but a short time previous to his martyrdom; for it contains some passages, mentioning the near approach of the destruction of the Jewish nation. This epistle was addressed to the Jewish converts dispersed in the eastern countries, and intended to comfort them under their sufferings, and confirm their faith.

The more conscientious and religious part of the citizens were exceedingly displeased with Ananus, on account of his being instrumental in the horrid murder of St. James; and they privately sent to Agrippa, who had advanced him to the dignity of the high-priesthood, beseeching that he might be restrained from the perpetration of future acts of unprovoked cruelty. Some of those people who went forth to meet Albinus, and congratulate him on his being promoted to his government, represented to him, that Ananus had abused the trust reposed in him, by assembling the council which had condemned James, without having a licence for that purpose. Hereupon Albinus wrote to Ananus, severely reproaching him for his conduct: and he also removed him from the pontifical office, after he had enjoyed it three months.

THE LIFE OF ST. SIMON THE ZEALOT.

PARTICULARS CONCERNING HIS SURNAME, AND DESCRIPTION OF THE ZEALOTS: MINISTRY, AND DEATH OF THIS APOSTLE.

IN the catalogue of the twelve apostles, St. Simon is distinguished from Simon Peter by two surnames, being called the Canaanite and the Zealot. Hence some have imagined that he was a native of Cana in Galilee, and that it was on occasion of his marriage that our Saviour wrought the miracle of changing water into wine. In his Greek Testament, Dr. Mill has observed, that this name is variously written, Cananæus, Chananæus, and Cannæus. The learned Cave says, it has no relation to Simon's birth-place, but descends from a Hebrew root denoting zeal. St. Luke styles him Simon Zelotes; so that it appears, his two names have the same signification. When and upon what account he was called Zealot, cannot be clearly ascertained. Nicephorus dates this from the time of his commencing the apostolical office: but had the name been given on this occasion, it is probable that the circumstance would have been mentioned in the Gospel, as well as the names of Peter and Boanerges, or have at least been taken notice of by some writer of much greater antiquity than Nicephorus. Others are of opinion that, previous to his engaging in the service of Christ, he was one of that particular sect or party among the Jews called Zealots, on account of the great zeal they professed for the honour of God. The zealots are mentioned by Josephus, and other ancient writers, as a people whose zeal degenerated into every species of the most abominable licentiousness; and these writers concur in mentioning them as the most detestable pests of the Jewish nation.

The Zealots looked upon themselves as the successors of Phineas, who, in a mighty zeal for the honour of God, did immediate execution upon Zimri and Cozbi. An act which was "counted to him for righteousness unto all posterities for evermore;" and God was so well pleased with it, that he made "with him and his seed after him the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for Israel." In imitation whereof these men took upon them to execute judgment in extraordinary cases, and that not only by the connivance, but with the leave both of the rulers and the people; till in after times, under a pretence of this, their zeal degenerated into all manner of licentiousness and wild extravagance, and they not only became the pests of the commonwealth at home, but opened the door for the Romans to break in upon them

to their final and irrecoverable ruin: they were continually prompting the people to throw off the Roman yoke, and to vindicate themselves respecting their native liberty; and when they had turned all things into hurry and confusion, themselves in the mean while fished in these troubled waters. Josephus gives a large account of them, and every where bewails them as the great plague of the nation. He tells us of them, that they scrupled not to rob any who had property, and to kill many of the prime of the nobility, under pretence of their holding correspondence with the Romans, and betraying the liberty of their country; openly glorying, that herein they were the benefactors and saviours of the people. They abrogated the succession of ancient families, thrusting obscure and ignoble persons in the high-priest's office, that so they might oblige the most infamous villains of their party; and, as if not content to injure men, they affronted heaven, and bid defiance to the Divinity itself, breaking into and profaning the most holy place. Styling themselves Zealots (says he) 'as if their undertakings were good and honourable, while they were greedy and emulous of the greatest wickedness, and outdid the worst of men.' Many attempts were made, especially by Annas the high-priest, to reduce them to order and sobriety. But neither force of arms, nor fair and gentle methods could do any good upon them; they held out, and went on in their violent proceedings, and, joining with the Idumeans, committed all manner of outrage, slaying the high-priests themselves. Nay, when Jerusalem was straitly besieged by the Roman army, they ceased not to create tumults and factions within, and were indeed the main cause of the ill success of the Jews in that calamitous and fatal war. It is probable that all who went under the denomination of this sect were not of this wretched and ungovernable temper, but that some of them were of a better make, of a more sober and peaceable disposition: and as it is not to be doubted but that our Simon was of this sect in general, so there is reason to believe he was of the better sort. However, this casts no more reflection upon his being called to the apostleship, than it did for St. Matthew, who was before a publican; or St. Paul's being a Pharisee, and so zealously persecuting the church of God.

Being invested in the apostolical office, no farther mention appears of him in the history of the Gospel. Continuing with the apostles till their dispersion up and down the world, he then applied himself to the execution of his charge. He is said to have directed his journey towards Egypt, thence to Cyrene and Africa (this indeed Baronius is not willing to believe, being desirous that St. Peter should have the honour to be the first that planted christianity in Africa), and throughout Mauritania and all Libya, preaching the Gospel to those remote and barbarous countries. Nor could the coldness of the climate benumb his zeal, or hinder him from shipping himself and the Christian doctrine over to the Western islands, yea, even to Britain itself. Here he preached, and wrought many miracles; and after infinite troubles and difficulties which he underwent (if we may believe our authors, whom, though Baronius, in this case, makes no great account of, yet never scruples freely to use their verdict and suffrage when they give evidence to his purpose), suffered martyrdom for the faith of Christ, as is not only affirmed by Nicephorus and Dorotheus, but expressly owned in the Greek Menologies; where we are told, that he went at last into Britain, and, having enlightened the minds of many with the doctrine of the Gospel, was crucified by the infidels, and buried there.

Some writers assert, that St. James travelled into Egypt, Cyrene, Africa, and likewise all over the Mauritania, proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to those ignorant and barbarous nations; and others add, that he afterwards proceeded into the western parts, and preached in Great-Britain; where, they assert, after he had converted great multitudes of the people, and sustained manifold hardships and persecutions, he suffered martyrdom by crucifixion. None of these writers, have pretended to ascertain the place either of the crucifixion or interment of this apostle.

St. Simon continued in communion with the rest of the apostles and disciples at Jerusalem; and at the feast of Pentecost received the same miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost; so that as he was equally qualified with the rest of his brethren for the apostolic office, in propagating the Gospel of the Son of God, we cannot doubt of his exercising his gifts with the same zeal and fidelity.

THE LIFE OF ST. JUDE.

ACCOUNT OF HIS DESCENT, TRAVELS, MINISTRY AND DEATH.

IN the evangelical history, this apostle is mentioned by three different names; Jude or Judas, Thaddeus, and Lebbeus. The first of these appellations he had in common with many other Jews, and in honour of one of the twelve patriarchs; and it is probable that the other two were added to distinguish him from Judas the traitor, whose conduct had rendered that appellation odious to the Christians. Lebbeus, according to the definition of St. Jerom, signifies a man of wit and understanding; and Thaddeus imports divine fervour.

St. Jude was brother to St. James the Less, being the sons of Cleophas and Mary; and consequently he was in the same degree of relationship to our Saviour with St. James, whose affinity to our Lord we have explained in the life of that apostle.

We are unable to determine when, or by what means, he became a disciple of Christ, no particulars concerning him being on record till we find him mentioned in the catalogue of the twelve apostles; nor is he afterwards mentioned till our Lord's last supper, when, discoursing to his disciples concerning his departure, he said to Judas, "the world should see him no more, though they should see him." Hereupon the apostle said, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?" By this question it appears that Jude expected the Messiah would establish a secular kingdom: but the reply corrects his error, informing him, that the world was unqualified for the glorious appearance of the Messiah, having treated his person with disrespect, and rejected his doctrine; and that therefore his intimate converse, and special acts of grace, would in future be confined to those who made worthy returns, by instances of mutual love, and a due obedience to his commands.

Eusebius relates, that soon after our Lord's ascension St. Thomas dispatched Thaddeus the apostle to Abgarus governor of Edessa, where he healed diseases, wrought miracles, expounded the doctrines of christianity, and converted Abgarus and his people to the faith: for all which pains, when the Toparch offered him vast gifts and presents, he refused them with a noble scorn, telling him, they had little reason to receive from others, what they had frequently relinquished and left themselves. A large account of this whole affair is extant in Eusebius, translated by him out of Syriac from the records of the city of Edessa. This Thaddeus St. Jerom expressly makes to be our St. Jude, though his bare authority is not in this case sufficient evidence; especially since Eusebius makes him no more than one of the seventy disciples, which he would scarce have done, had he been one of the twelve. He calls him indeed an apostle, but that may imply no more than according to the large acceptation of the word, that he was a disciple, a companion, and an assistant to them, as we know the seventy eminently were. Nor is any thing more common in ancient ecclesiastical writers, than for the first planters and propagators of the christian religion in any country to be honoured with the name and title of apostles. But however this be, at his first setting out to preach the Gospel, he went up and down Judæa and Galilee, then through Samaria into Idumea, and to the cities of Arabia, and the neighbouring countries, and after to Syria and Mesopotamia. Nicephorus adds, that he came at last to Edessa, where Abgarus was governor; and where the other Thaddeus, one of the seventy, had been before him. Here he perfected what the other had begun, and having, by his sermons and miracles, established the religion of our Saviour, died a peaceable and a quiet death; though Dorotheus makes him slain at Berytus, and honourably buried there. By the almost general consent of the writers of the Latin church, he is said to have travelled into Persia, where, after great success in his apostolical ministry for many years, he was at last for his free and open reproving the superstitious rites and usages of the Magi, cruelly put to death.

That he was one of the married apostles, sufficiently appears from his *υἱοὶ*, or grandsons mentioned by Eusebius, of whom Hegesippus gives this account. Domitian the emperor, whose

whose enormous wickedness had awakened in him the quickest jealousies, and made him suspect every one that might look like a rival in the empire, had heard that there were some of the line of David and Christ's kindred who yet remained. Two grandchildren of St. Jude, the brother of our Lord, were brought before him: having confessed that they were of the race and posterity of David, he asked what possessions and estate they had; they told him that they had but a very few acres of land, out of the improvement whereof they both paid him tribute, and maintained themselves with their own hard labour, as by the hardness and callousness of their hands (which they then shewed him) did appear. He then inquired of them concerning Christ, and the state of his kingdom, what kind of empire it was, and when and where it would commence. To which they replied, that his kingdom was not of this world, nor of the lordships and dominions of it, but heavenly and angelical, and would finally take place in the end of the world; when, coming with great glory, he would judge the quick and the dead, and award to all men recompences according to their works. The issue was, that looking upon the meanness and simplicity of the men as below his jealousies and fears, he dismissed them without any severity used against them; who being now beheld not only as kinsmen, but as martyrs of our Lord, were honoured by all, preferred to places of authority and government in the church, and lived till the time of Trajan.

St. Jude left only one epistle of catholic and universal concernment, inscribed at large to all Christians. It was some time before it met with general reception in the church, or was taken notice of. The author indeed styles not himself an apostle; but no more does St. James, St. John, nor sometimes St. Paul himself. And why should he fare the worse for his humility, only for calling himself the "servant of Christ," when he might have added not only "apostle," but "the brother of our Lord?" The best is, he has added what was equivalent, "Jude the brother of James," a character that can belong to none but our apostle; beside, that the title of the epistle, which is of great antiquity, runs thus, "The general Epistle of Jude the Apostle." One great argument, as St. Jerom informs us, against the authority of this epistle of old, was its quoting a passage out of an apocryphal book of Enoch. This book, called "The Apocalypse of Enoch," was very early extant in the church, frequently mentioned, and passages cited out of it by Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, and others, some of whom accounted it little less than canonical. But what if our apostle had it not out of his apocryphal book, but from some prophecy current from age to age, handed to him by common tradition, or immediately revealed to him by the Spirit of God? But suppose it taken out of that book going under Enoch's name, this makes nothing against the authority of the epistle; every thing, I hope, is not presently false that is contained in an apocryphal and uncanonical writing; nor does the taking a single testimony out of it any more infer the apostle's approbation of all the rest, than St. Paul's quoting a good sentence or two out of Menander, Aratus, and Epimenides, imply that he approved all the rest of the writings of these heathen poets. And indeed nothing could be more fit and proper than this way, if we consider that the apostle, in this epistle, chiefly argues against the Gnosticks, who mainly traded in such traditionary and apocryphal writings, and probably in this very book of Enoch. The same account may be given of that other passage in this epistle concerning the contention between Michael the archangel and the devil, about the burial of Moses's body, no where extant in the holy records, supposed to have been taken out of a Jewish writing, called *פְּסִקְתָּא מֹשֶׁה* or "The dismissal of Moses," mentioned by some of the Greek fathers, under the title of *Ἀναβασίς Μωϋσέως*, or "The ascension of Moses," in which this passage was upon record. Nor is it any more a wonder that St. Jude should do this, than that St. Paul should put down Jannes and Jambres for the two magicians of Pharaoh that opposed Moses, which he must either derive from tradition, or fetch out of some uncanonical author of these times, there being no mention of their names in Moses's relation of that matter. But be these passages whence they will, it is enough to us that the Spirit of God has made them authentic, and consecrated them as part of the holy canon.

Being thus satisfied in the canonical nature of this epistle, none but St. Jude could be the author of it; for who but he was the brother of St. James? a character by which he is de-

scribed in the evangelical story more than once. Grotius indeed will needs have it written by a younger Jude, the fifteenth bishop of Jerusalem, in the reign of Adrian; and because he saw that that passage, "the brother of James," stood full in his way, he concludes, without any shadow of reason, that it was added by some transcriber. But is not this to make too bold with sacred things? Is not this to indulge too great a liberty? This once allowed, it will soon open a door to the wildest and most extravagant conjectures, and no man shall know where to find sure footing for his faith. But the reader may remember what we have elsewhere observed concerning the posthumous annotations of that learned man. Not to say that there are many things in this epistle that evidently refer to the time of this apostle, and imply it to have been written upon the same occasion, and about the same time, with the second epistle of Peter, between which and this there is a very great affinity both in words and matter; nay, there want not some who endeavour to prove this epistle to have been written no less than twenty-seven years before that of Peter: and that hence it was that Peter borrowed these passages that are so near akin to those in this epistle: some are, however, of opinion, that Jude appears to intimate, that most of the apostles were dead at the time of his writing this epistle, which seems not to have been written till after the reign of Herod and the destruction of Jerusalem.

The design of the epistle is, to preserve Christians from the infection of Gnosticism, the loose and debauched principles vented by Simon Magus and his followers, whose wretched doctrines and practices he briefly and elegantly represents, persuading Christians heartily "to contend for the faith that had been delivered to them;" and to avoid these pernicious seducers as pests and firebrands; not to communicate with them in their sins, lest they perished with them in that terrible vengeance which was ready to overtake them.

We are told by Paulinus, that the province which fell to the share of St. Jude in the apostolical division, was Lybia; but he does not mention whether it was the Cyrenean Lybia, which is supposed to have received the Gospel of St. Mark, or the more southern part of Africa. We have no other account of his preaching in these countries. The Armenians aver, that St. Jude first introduced christianity amongst them, and will not admit that his remains were deposited in St. Peter's at Rome; urging that he died, and was buried in their country. The Greek Menologies intimate, that this apostle died in consequence of being shot with arrows: but, according to the general opinion of the writers of the Latin church, he suffered martyrdom with St. Peter in Persia; and, in consequence of this supposition, both these apostles are commemorated on the same anniversary.

THE LIFE OF ST. MATHIAS.

HIS ELECTION TO THE APOSTLESHIP; AND CONSEQUENT MINISTRY AND MARTYRDOM.

AFTER the eleven apostles had attended our Saviour to the summit of Mount Olivet, and been witnesses to his glorious ascension into heaven, they returned to the house of St. John, on Mount Sion, which, Nicephorus informs us, was the place where the primitive Christians were accustomed to assemble. The company consisted of about an hundred and twenty persons; and in the midst of these St. Peter arose, and delivered a succinct narrative of the treacherous conduct of Judas Iscariot. After this, he moved for the immediate election of a new apostle, that the original number might be again complete; recommending at the same time, that the person to whom this important office should be committed, might be one of those disciples who had punctually attended Jesus during the whole course of his public ministry, from the time of his baptism by St. John, to that of his ascension into heaven; for it was necessary that the person to succeed to the apostolical dignity should be an unexceptionable witness of the holy life and mighty works of the

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divine Jesus, and particularly of his resurrection, that eminent ratification of all his doctrines and miracles.

The assembly immediately assented to the proposal of St. Peter, and two persons were nominated as candidates; one of these was called Joseph, surnamed Barsabas and Justus, supposed to be the brother of James the Less; and the other was called Matthias. The mode of election was by lots, a manner of determination commonly resorted to, both by the Jews and Gentiles, for the choice of magistrates and other public officers. This method of decision the apostles had recourse to, particularly on this occasion, because they were not yet inspired by the Holy Ghost, by whose special influence they were afterwards directed in all important concerns of life. They now fervently prayed to the Almighty, that he who knew "the hearts of all men, would shew which of those two he had chosen." The lots being put into an urn, the name of Matthias was first drawn; and he was accordingly declared to be the twelfth apostle.

Hence we may with certainty conclude, though the scripture be silent with respect to the time when Matthias became a disciple of our blessed Saviour, that he was one of his earliest followers and attendants. St. Peter expressed an anxious wish, that the man who should succeed to the apostolical vacancy, might be one fully qualified, with the rest of the brethren, to bear testimony, from his own knowledge, of the divine nature and wonderful works of the holy Jesus. Eusebius and Epiphanius, and Clemens Alexandrius, say, that St. Matthias was one of the seventy disciples of our Lord.

Not long after this election, the promised powers of the Holy Ghost were conferred upon the apostles, to qualify them for that great and arduous employment upon which they were sent, namely, the establishing the holy religion of the Son of God among the children of men. St. Matthias spent the first year of his ministry in Judæa, where he reaped a very considerable harvest of souls; and then travelled into different parts of the world, to publish the glad tidings of salvation to people who had never before heard of a Saviour. The Greek writers affirm, that he travelled eastward. St. Jerom says, his principal residence was near the irruption of the river Aparus, and the haven Hyllus, in Cappadocia. He was indefatigably industrious in his endeavours to convert the uncivilized inhabitants to christianity, which considerable numbers of them embraced. In the prosecution of this holy work, however, he was exposed to innumerable hardships and persecutions; and he suffered martyrdom in the year of our Lord 61, or as others assert, in the year 64. Dorotheus asserts, that he died at Sebastopolis, and was buried there near the temple of the Sun. An ancient martyrology says, he was seized by the Jews, and, being accused as a blasphemer, was first stoned, and then beheaded: but the Greek offices, which are supported by several ancient breviaries, say, that he was crucified. Some contend, that his body was conveyed to Rome: and others as strenuously assert, that it was interred at Treves, in Germany. Bollandus is of opinion that the body of Matthias which is at Rome, is that of Matthias who was bishop of Jerusalem in the year of our Lord 120, and that his history has been confounded with that of the apostle.

It is the advice of the learned Francis Combefis, that we should believe nothing of St. Matthias, but what we find in the Acts of the Apostles. However, the curious may be entertained with a history of his life in Bollandus, said to have been written in the twelfth century, by a monk of the abbey of St. Matthias at Treves: wherein it is affirmed, that our apostle was a native of Bethlehem, of the tribe of Judah, and of an illustrious family: that he was well instructed, not only by his parents, but by an eminent Rabbi, named Simeon: that after his election to the apostleship, he was appointed to preach the Gospel in some province of Palestine, where he wrought abundance of miracles, and converted great multitudes to the faith of Christ: that thirty-three years, or thereabout, after the passion of Christ, Ananus the younger, high-priest of the Jews, having put James the Less, bishop of Jerusalem, to death, caused Matthias, at the same time, to be apprehended in Galilee, and brought before him; where, when upon examination, having confessed Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah, the high-priest condemned him to be stoned, and the sentence was immediately executed.

THE LIFE OF ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST.

ACCOUNT OF HIS TRAVELS, LABOURS IN THE GOSPEL, AND CRUEL MARTYRDOM.

THIS evangelist, who was one of the tribe of Levi, was descended from Jewish ancestors. By the ancients he was generally esteemed to be one of the seventy disciples of our blessed Saviour; and Eusebius says, that he was sent by St. Peter to preach the Gospel in Egypt; and in Alexandria, the metropolis of the country, he established a Christian church. He converted great multitudes of both sexes; and his preaching was attended with such remarkable success, that the people not only embraced the Christian faith, but also conformed more strictly to a holy life and conduct.

Having preached in several of the oriental parts of Egypt, he travelled westward to Lybia, passing through Marmarica, Pentapolis, and other neighbouring countries, inhabited by barbarous and idolatrous people; but by his preaching and miracles he prevailed upon them to embrace christianity, and confirmed them in that faith.

Returning to Alexandria, he preached the Gospel with great freedom and boldness, and constituted governors and pastors of the church; but while industriously labouring in the vineyard of his great Master, his progress in his holy avocation was interrupted by the idolatrous people.

About Easter, when they were celebrating the solemnities of Serapis, the multitude tumultuously entering the church, seized St. Mark, who was then performing divine service, and having bound his feet with cords, cruelly dragged him through the streets, and over the most craggy places, to the Bucelus, a precipice near the sea, where they confined him in a lonesome prison. During the night, his great and beloved Master appeared to him in a vision, and comforted him under his afflictions, encouraging him to submit to his fate with christian magnanimity and fortitude.

On the following morning the populace renewed their barbarity, dragging him about the streets till he expired. After this horrid murder, they wantonly mangled, and then cruelly burnt the body of the deceased. This abominable act of cruelty being perpetrated, the Christians carefully collected the bones and ashes of St. Mark, and buried them near the place where he had been accustomed to preach. The remains of this evangelist were afterwards removed from Alexandria with great funeral pomp, and conveyed to Venice, where they were religiously honoured, and St. Mark was adopted the titular saint and patron of that state. This evangelist suffered martyrdom on the fifteenth of April, but in what year is uncertain; though from circumstances it appears probable that it happened towards the conclusion of the reign of Nero.

The Gospel of St. Mark was written at the earnest intreaty of the converts in the city of Rome. Not content with having heard the discourses of St. Peter, they solicited St. Mark, his disciple, to commit to writing a narrative of what that apostle had delivered to them. This task was undertaken with cheerfulness, and executed with remarkable success. The work being approved by St. Peter, it was commanded to be publicly read in the Christian assemblies.

The original Greek copy of St. Mark's Gospel is reported to be in the possession of the Venetians, and is pretended to have been written by the evangelist at Aquileia, and thence translated to Venice, after many ages; but the letters are so worn out that they cannot be read, and the whole story appears to be a forgery. For that his Gospel was composed at Rome, and at the intreaty of the Christians there, is the unanimous tradition of the ancients, such as Papias, Irenæus, Clemens, Tertullian, and others; as also that it was perused by St. Peter, and ratified by his authority. Only Irenæus intimates, that it was written after St. Peter's death; and Dr. Cave seems to believe, that in his life-time he only furnished the evangelist with materials, and gave him directions for putting them together as we now have them; but that the work was not actually composed till after the apostle's death. Clemens Alexandrinus is of opinion, that he composed it out of those discourses which

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St. Peter usually delivered to his auditors. It was anciently styled St. Peter's Gospel; and St. Chrysostom observes, that the style and manner of expression is like that in his epistles, representing much in a few words.

THE LIFE OF ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST.

HIS BIRTH, LEARNING, WRITINGS; AND TRADITIONARY ACCOUNT CONCERNING HIM.

THE city of Antioch, the metropolis of Syria, gave birth to St. Luke. This place abounded in seminaries of learning, and was eminent for the proficients it produced in the arts and sciences. Having acquired a considerable share of learning in his own country, he travelled into Greece and Egypt for further improvement; and becoming remarkably skilful in the science of physic, he determined upon the practice thereof, as the means of earning a subsistence. But it does not hence follow that he was a man distinguished either for his birth or fortune; for, in the early ages, the healing art was generally practised by domestics, or persons in a dependent situation; Grotius is therefore of opinion that St. Luke went to Rome, and lived there in quality of a physician to some noble family; and that, after obtaining his freedom there, he returned to his own country, and there continued to pursue the practice of physic.

He also acquired great reputation by his skill in painting; and an ancient inscription found in a vault near the church of St. Maria de Via lata at Rome, supposed to be the place where St. Luke resided, a picture of the blessed Virgin is mentioned, "being one of the seven painted by St. Luke."

The evangelist, whose life we are writing, was a Jewish proselyte: but the time of his conversion is uncertain. St. Luke was the constant companion of St. Paul in all his travels, and his fellow-labourer in the vineyard of Christ. He was highly esteemed by that apostle, who appears to enjoy particular satisfaction in acknowledging him as his companion. He calls St. Luke "the beloved physician," and "the brother whose praise is in the Gospel."

St. Luke wrote two books, in the Greek language, for the use of the Christian church, being his Gospel, and the Acts of the Apostles; and he dedicated both these productions to Theophilus, which many of the ancients suppose to be a feigned name, denoting a lover of God, an appellation commonly attributed to sincere Christians. But others are of a contrary opinion, and because he has the title of "most excellent," the usual form of address to princes and great men, they suppose Theophilus to have been a person of rank.

St. Luke is supposed to have written his Gospel at Rome, during the two years imprisonment of St. Paul in that city. He forcibly mentions the several circumstances which relate to the sacerdotal character of the blessed Jesus, and records the principal transactions of his life; and therefore, in accommodating the four symbolical representations, mentioned in Ezekiel *, to the four evangelists, the ancients assigned an ox or calf to St. Luke.

The history of the apostolical acts of St. Luke was written, no doubt, at Rome. In the dedication of it to the same Theophilus, it appears that it was composed after his Gospel: and from the conclusion we may gather, that he finished it at the end of St. Paul's two years' imprisonment: though we may well take it for granted, that he committed to writing the several facts all along at the times when they happened, having himself been an eye-witness of them. In this history, he not only relates the actions, but also the sufferings, of some of the chief apostles, and of St. Paul especially; of whose carriage and

* Ezek. i. 10. The other representations are a man, a lion, and an eagle; the first of which is generally given to St. Matthew; the second to St. Mark; and the last to St. John.

most intimate transactions, he was best able to give a true account, having been his constant attendant. But, among other things, he enlarges particularly upon the great miracles wrought by the apostles, as being the grand confirmation of the truth of Christ's resurrection.

Having now lost the light which his own history affords us of himself, we are much bewildered among the ecclesiastical historians, to find how he was employed the remaining part of his life, or where and in what manner he ended his days. An Arabic writer of his life, in Kirstenius, says, that presently after St. Paul's enlargement, he was martyred at Rome: for which he gives this reason, that if he had lived longer, he would have continued his Acts of the Apostles farther. Metaphrastes makes him leave Paul at Rome, travel into Egypt, and take upon him the episcopal charge of the church of Thebais: but he is not easily credited in this. Epiphanius reports him to have preached in Dalmatia, Galatia, Italy, and Macedonia.

As little agreement is there either about the time or manner of St. Luke's death: some affirming him to die in Egypt, others in Greece; the Roman Martyrology, in Bithynia; Dorotheus, at Ephesus; some make him die a natural, others a violent death. Indeed neither Eusebius nor St. Jerom take any notice of it: but Nazianzen, Paulinus bishop of Nola, and several others, expressly assure us of his martyrdom; whereof Nicephorus gives this particular account: that coming into Greece, he successfully preached, and baptized many into the Christian faith, till a party making head against him, drew him to execution; and, for want of a cross, whereon to dispatch him presently, they hanged him on an olive-tree, in the eightieth, others say the eighty-fourth, year of his age. His body afterwards, by the command of Constantine, or his son Constantius, was solemnly removed to Constantinople, and buried in the great church built to the memory of the apostles.

THE LIFE OF ST. BARNABAS.

HIS TRANSACTIONS, LABOURS, TRAVELS WITH ST. PAUL, AND A PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF THE EPISTLE ASCRIBED TO HIM.

THOUGH not one of the twelve, St. Barnabas is honoured by St. Luke, and the primitive writers, with the title of an apostle; and indeed, a great share which he is represented to have had in the "Acts of the Apostles," give him a just title to this distinction. He was originally called Joses; but his countrymen added the name of Barnabas, to denote some excellent quality which he possessed. St. Luke interprets this name, "the son of consolation;" and St. Jerom says, it further signifies "the son of a prophet." Both these explanations well accord with the character of this apostle, who was eminent for his prophetic gifts and endowments, as well as for that spirit of benevolence which he was constantly exerting in behalf of his Christian brethren. He was a descendent of the tribe of Levi; and his ancestors had removed from Judæa, and settled in the isle of Cyprus. He was educated at Jerusalem, under Gamaliel, the preceptor of St. Paul. It is probable that the accidental circumstance of being educated under the same master, proved the first foundation of that intimate friendship which subsisted between these two eminent servants of the blessed Jesus.

The first mention of Barnabas, in the scripture, is the record of that memorable service to the church, in disposing of his patrimony in Cyprus, and giving the whole produce to the apostles, to be distributed by them among the indigent followers of Christ. This example was followed by many other opulent Christians: but Barnabas is mentioned as having sold the most valuable estate in the island, and being the most active in promoting this laudable design.

When St. Paul, three years after his conversion, came to Jerusalem, he addressed himself to Barnabas, who introduced him to Peter and James, and satisfied them of the sincerity of his faith in Jesus. This recommendation was so powerful, that Paul was not only
admitted



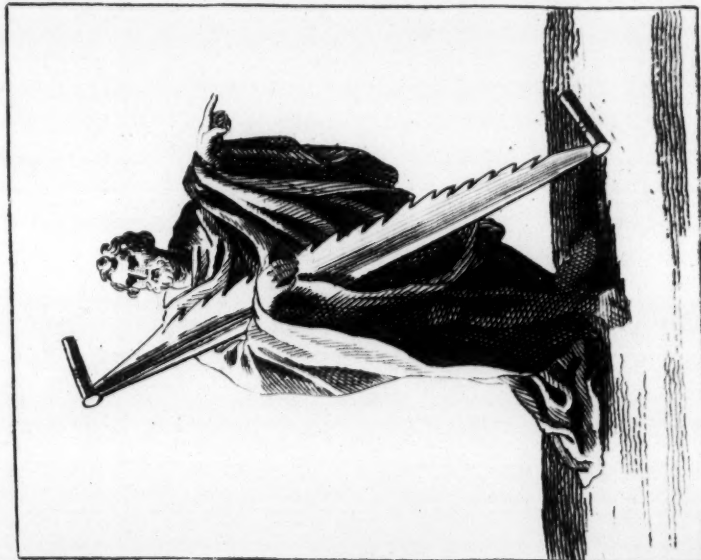
ST. JAMES, the Less.



ST. JUDE.



ST. MATTHIAS.



ST. SIMON.



ST. BARNABAS.



ST. PHILIP.



admitted into the communion of the apostles, but invited to Peter's house, "and abode with him fifteen days."

Upon the inhabitants of Antioch making application for some of the superiors of the religious order to come amongst them, in order to confirm their faith in the Gospel, which had been preached to them with remarkable success, St. Barnabas was deputed to preach the Gospel to those people, and, by his exemplary life and pious discourses, he made very considerable additions to the Christian church. Their labours proved successful; and the disciples of Antioch, who before this had called themselves brethren, believers, and elect, were styled by their enemies Nazarenes and Galileans, were now first called Christians.

In consequence of the prophecy of Agabus, that there would shortly be a famine throughout the world, or, as it is most generally understood, throughout the Roman empire, and particularly in Judæa, the Antiochians sent large contributions by Barnabas and Paul, for the relief of their brethren in Jerusalem. Having discharged their charitable commission, they returned to Jerusalem, taking with them John, whose surname was Mark, the son of Mary the sister of Barnabas.

A short time after the return of the apostles to Antioch, an express revelation was made by one of the prophets, purporting, that "Barnabas and Saul should be set apart for an extraordinary work, whereunto the Holy Ghost had assigned them." In consequence of this, a day was appointed for a solemn mission, and they were solemnly ordained to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. From being united with St. Paul in this commission, St. Barnabas obtained the name of an apostle.

Being consecrated the apostles of the Gentiles, Barnabas and Paul departed from Antioch, being attended by John Mark, who acted in the capacity of their deacon. Having preached the Gospel in various parts, they arrived at Pamphylia, whence, to the great grief of his uncle, Barnabas returned to Jerusalem.

Proceeding to Lystra, Paul cured a man who had been born lame; and this miracle so astonished the inhabitants, that they behaved towards him and his companion as divinities: but they modestly disclaimed the honours offered them by the people.

By the artifices of their former malicious persecutors, the inhabitants of Lystra were at length so violently inflamed against the apostles, that they assaulted them with unrelenting fury, and even stoned Paul till they believed him to be dead. By the divine assistance, however, he soon recovered his health and spirits; then departed with his companion for Derbe, where they converted many of the people to the religion of the holy Jesus.

After travelling through several countries, preaching the Gospel, and confirming the faith of their disciples, they returned to Antioch; where, soon after their arrival, they assembled the church for the purpose of composing a disagreement, occasioned by some of the Jewish converts having endeavoured to persuade the Gentiles that they were enjoined to an observation of the law of Moses, as well as the Gospel dispensation. All their endeavours to reconcile this difference proving ineffectual, Paul, Barnabas, and others, were nominated to submit the question to the decision of the church at Jerusalem. The synod having decreed, that the Gentile converts should not have circumcision and other Jewish rites imposed upon them, the apostles returned to Antioch, accompanied by John Mark.

Some time after this, St. Peter arrived at Antioch; and, lest he should render himself odious to the bigotted Jews, refused to hold communication with the Gentiles; and the authority of this example seduced Barnabas into the same error; of which, however, they both repented, in consequence of being severely reproved by St. Paul.

A few days after the above event, Paul proposed to Barnabas, that they should repeat their late travels among the Gentiles; and this was approved of by Barnabas, who, however, desired that they might be accompanied by his reconciled nephew, John Mark. This was resolutely opposed by Paul, on account of John Mark having, when at Pamphylia, proved himself deficient in the constancy of becoming a faithful minister of Christ. Hence arose a disagreement; in consequence of which these holy men, who had, for many years, been

been fellow-labourers in the vineyard of Christ, separated: Barnabas and his kinsman sailed for Cyprus; and Paul, accompanied by Silas, travelled into Syria and Cilicia.

Barnabas afterwards travelled into various quarters of the globe, preaching the glad tidings of salvation, healing the sick, and performing other miracles. Returning again to his native island, he pursued the exercise of his holy ministration. While he was preaching in the synagogue, some Jews from Syria and Salamis seized and barbarously stoned him to death. John Mark, who was a spectator of this horrid act of cruelty, privately interred his body in a cave, near the city. The body of St. Barnabas is said to have been discovered during the reign of the emperor Zeno, in the year of our Lord 485; and the tradition adds, that a Hebrew manuscript of the Gospel of St. Matthew was found lying upon his breast.

The church hath not received into the canon of holy scripture the epistle which bears this apostle's name: and Eusebius and St. Jerom for that reason call it apocryphal; but they do not deny that it was written by St. Barnabas. Clemens Alexandrinus and Origen often quote it, as his. And Menardus, who first published the Greek, with the old Latin version, shews very well that this is the same which the ancients had; because all their quotations are found in it, unless it be one passage, where Clemens Alexandrinus seems to have mistaken the name of Barnabas for that of Clemens Romanus. The style of it favours of the apostolic age; yet it appears to have been composed some time after the destruction of Jerusalem, when Barnabas indeed might be still living. The beginning of it is wanting; and the inscription, if ever it had any. But the matter of it evidently shews that it was written to such Jews as are mentioned in the fifteenth chapter of Acts, who, having embraced christianity, still held that the observance of the ceremonial law was necessary to salvation. It shews that this law is abolished by the Gospel, and that the usages of it are of no concernment to Christians. The latter part of it contains excellent precepts, set forth under the notion of two ways; the one of light, the other of darkness; the one under the conduct of the angels of God, the other under the influence of the angels of Satan. The way of light is a summary of what a Christian is to do, that he may attain eternal happiness; and the way of darkness represents those particular sins and vices which exclude men from the kingdom of God. He closes the whole with pressing Christians so to live in faith and love, that they may be blessed to all eternity.

THE LIFE OF ST. STEPHEN.

HIS ZEALOUS DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL, AND MARTYRDOM BY THE JEWS.

TH E R E are no records concerning the birth, country, or parents of St. Stephen. It does not appear that St. Stephen, and the other six deacons, had any particular designation previous to their appointment to the service of the tables; and therefore Stephen could not have been one of the seventy disciples, although it is probable that he was long a zealous follower of the blessed Jesus.

He was a faithful promoter of the religion of the Lord Jesus, and performed a great number of miracles in confirmation of his doctrine. His unremitting solicitude in obtaining converts to the cause of christianity, highly exasperated the Jews. Some people of the synagogue of the freedmen of Cyrene, Alexandria, and other places, engaged in a controversy with Stephen: and being unable to destroy the force of his arguments, they suborned false witnesses to accuse him of having uttered blasphemy against God and Moses. These mercenary and perjured wretches deposed before the Sanhedrim, that they had heard Stephen speak disrespectfully of the temple and law; and affirm, that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the holy place, and abolish the law of Moses. St. Stephen appeared before this assembly with an undaunted resolution; and while he spoke in defence of his own innocence, his face became brilliant as that of an angel.

Having concluded his defence, his enemies were furiously enraged: but, regardless of their

their malice, Stephen raised his eyes towards heaven, and perceived the glory of God, and the blessed Jesus standing on the right-hand of the Divine Majesty. Addressing himself to the council, he declared the particulars of his vision; which so exasperated them, that they put their hands to their ears, and by other signals intimated that they had heard some dreadful blasphemy; and immediately after they hurried him out of the city, and stoned him to death.

On these cruel occasions, the witnesses were accustomed to cast the first stones at the victims of the popular fury: but whether they conformed to this particular at the martyrdom of St. Stephen, is unknown. The evangelist, however, informs us, that the witnesses were principally concerned in this barbarous transaction; for they stripped off their garments, and laid them at the feet of Saul, then a violent persecutor of the Christians, but afterwards one of the most zealous ministers of the Gospel. In the midst of his torments, St. Stephen continued fervently to pray to the Almighty, that he would pardon his persecutors, "saying, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.'"

THE LIFE OF ST. TIMOTHY.

HIS UNWEARIED LABOURS AND TRAVELS FOR PROMOTING THE GOSPEL.

ACCORDING to some writers, Timothy was a native of Lystra; but others are of opinion that he was born at Derbe. His father was a Gentile, and his mother was a Jewess, named Eunice. St. Paul extols the parents of Timothy on account of their piety, and of the great care they took of the education of their son.

When St. Paul came to Lystra, about the year of Christ 52, he circumcised Timothy, previous to admitting him among the number of his disciples. Timothy was so active a minister, that he rendered Paul very essential service in promulgating the Gospel. We cannot ascertain the time when he was constituted a bishop, but it is supposed that he very early received the imposition of the hands of the apostle. St. Paul calls him his dearly beloved son, his brother, the companion of his labours, and a man of God.

Timothy accompanied St. Paul to Macedonia, Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea; and at this latter place he was left, together with Silas, to confirm the converts. From Athens Paul sent for Timothy to join him; and soon after his arrival, he was dispatched by the apostle to Thessalonica. From this place, accompanied by Silas, he repaired to meet St. Paul at Corinth.

Some years afterwards, St. Paul dispatched Timothy to Erastus into Macedonia, ordering the former to call at Corinth, and remind the inhabitants of the doctrines he had preached to them. Joining Paul in Asia, they travelled together into Macedonia.

When St. Paul returned from Rome, in the year of Christ 64, he left Timothy at Ephesus, to increase the church there, of which he was the first bishop. From Macedonia St. Paul wrote to Timothy recommending him to moderate his austerities, and to drink a little wine, on account of the weakness of his stomach, and the frequent infirmities to which he was subject. After the arrival of the apostle at Rome, in the year 65, being but a short time before his death, he wrote a second epistle to Timothy, expressing the most tender affection for that disciple. He requests him to repair to Rome before the winter, and to take with him several articles which he had left at Troas. It is reasonable to suppose, that he complied with the apostle's desire, and that he was a witness to his martyrdom. There is nothing known to a certainty with respect to the death of Timothy. If he did not die before the year 97, we can hardly doubt but that he must have been the pastor of the church of Ephesus, to whom St. John writes in his Revelation. It is supposed that Onesimus succeeded Timothy in the pastoral care of this church.

THE LIFE OF ST. TITUS.

ACCOUNT OF HIS BIRTH, CONVERSION, TRAVELS, MINISTRY, AND DEATH.

BEING born a Gentile, Titus became a convert to the preaching of St. Paul, who calls him his son. He accompanied Paul to Jerusalem, when the apostles went thither to procure the decision of the synod, as to whether the converted Gentiles were subject to the ceremonies of the Jewish law. Several persons were at this time very urgent that Paul should perform the ceremony of circumcision upon Titus, but to this neither of them would consent.

Titus was sent by St. Paul to compose some differences which had arisen in the Christian church at Corinth; and he succeeded in this commission, but refused to accept the presents offered him by the inhabitants, thereby proving that he did not act from mercenary motives, but from an anxious concern for their eternal salvation.

From Corinth Titus went into Macedonia, from whence Paul ordered him to return, in order to make preparations for his arrival. He immediately departed, taking with him the second epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. About the year of Christ 63, Titus was constituted bishop of the isle of Crete.

The following year the apostle wrote, desiring, that when he should have sent Tychicus or Artemas to succeed him in the care of the church in the isle of Crete, that Titus would come to him at Nicopolis, where he intended to reside during the winter season. In this epistle he enumerates the qualities necessary in a bishop, and instructs Titus in the questions which he was to propose to persons of all descriptions. He also exhorts him to maintain a strict authority over the Cretans, and to reprove them for the many vices to which they were addicted. It is not known where this epistle was written, or by what messenger it was sent.

Titus was appointed to preach the Gospel in Dalmatia, where he resided in the year 65, when the apostle wrote his second epistle to Timothy. He afterwards returned into Crete, and preached the Gospel there, and in the neighbouring islands. Titus died in the ninety-fourth year of his age, and his remains were interred in the island of Crete. Several writers concur in affirming, that the cathedral of the city of Candia was dedicated to Titus.

THE LIFE OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

ST. John says, that Mary the wife of Cleophas, who was the mother of those whom the Gospel styles our Lord's brethren, was the Virgin's sister Mary that was of the royal race of David. She was allied likewise to the family of Aaron, since Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias, and mother of John the Baptist, was her cousin.

The excesses of that devotion which has been paid to the blessed Virgin in the legendary tales and lying visions of monks, cannot in reason blemish her real excellencies, no more than the idolatries of the Pagans can obscure the light of the sun which is deified. After all the abuses of superstition or profaneness, the extremes of honour and dishonour, there will ever be a very high esteem and veneration due to the mother of the blessed Jesus.

That the mother of our Lord, notwithstanding her marriage, was even in that state to remain a pure virgin, and to conceive Christ in a miraculous manner, is the clear doctrine of

of the holy scriptures. "Behold," says Isaiah, in ch. vii. prophesying of this mysterious incarnation, "a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son." The Hebrew word *Almah* most properly signifies a virgin; and so it is translated here by all the ancient interpreters; and never once used in the scripture in any other sense, as several learned men have proved against the pretensions, particularly, of the modern Jews. It primarily signifies hid, or concealed; whence it is used to denote a virgin, because of the custom in the eastern countries of keeping such concealed from the view of men, never suffering them to stir out of the women's apartment.

The Virgin Mary being espoused, or married to Joseph, the angel Gabriel appeared to her, in order to acquaint her, that she should become the mother of the Messiah. Mary asked him how that could be, since she knew no man? To which the angel replied, that the Holy Ghost should come upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadow her: so that she should conceive without the concurrence of any man. And to confirm what he had said to her, and shew that nothing is impossible to God, he added, that her cousin Elizabeth, who was both old and barren, was then in the sixth month of her pregnancy. Mary answered him, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word." And by the miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost, she presently conceived the Son of God; the true Emmanuel, that is to say, "God with us."

St. Luke assures us, that a little while after she set out for Hebron, a city in the mountains of Judah, in order to visit her cousin Elizabeth, to congratulate her upon her pregnancy, which she had learned from the angel, at an age when such a blessing was not usually to be expected. And no sooner had she entered the house and began to speak, than upon the voice of Mary's salutation, her child, young John the Baptist, transported with supernatural emotions of joy, leaped in her womb. Whereupon she was filled with the Holy Ghost; and having, by divine inspiration, the mystery of the incarnation communicated to her, she also saluted Mary, and cried out, "Blessed art thou amongst women; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." Then Mary, filled with acknowledgments, and supernatural light, praised God, saying, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour," &c.

Mary having continued here about three months, till Elizabeth was delivered, as St. Ambrose thinks, that she might see him on whose account she principally made that visit, she then returned to her own house at Nazareth. When she was ready to be delivered, an edict was published by Cæsar Augustus, in the year of the world 4000, the first of Christ, and the third before the vulgar æra, which decreed that all the subjects of the Roman empire should go to their respective cities and places; there to have their names registered according to their families. Thus Joseph and Mary, who were both of the lineage of David, repaired to the city of Bethlehem, the original and native place of their family.

While they were in this city, the time being fulfilled in which Mary was to be delivered, she brought forth her first-born son, wrapped him in swaddling-cloaths, and laid him in a manger of the stable or cavern whither they had retired; for they could find no place in the public inn, because of the great concourse of people that were then at Bethlehem on the same occasion: or they were forced to withdraw into the stable of the inn, not being able to get a more convenient place for her to be delivered in.

After Mary's delivery, the angels made the birth of Christ known to the shepherds who were in the fields near Bethlehem; and who came in the night to see Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger, in order to pay him the tribute of adoration. Mary took notice of all these things, and laid them up in her heart. Some time after came the Magi, or wise-men, from the east, and brought to Jesus the mysterious presents of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, having been directed thither by a star which led the way before them, to the very house where the babe lay. After this, being warned by an angel that appeared to them in a dream, they returned into their own country, by a way different from that by which they came, without giving Herod the intelligence he wanted; which he pretended

pretended was in order to come and worship the babe, though his real design was to cut him off, from a jealousy of his rivalling that artful monarch in his kingdom.

The time of Mary's purification being come, that is, forty days after the birth of Jesus, she went to Jerusalem, in order to present her son in the temple; and there to offer the sacrifice appointed by the law, for the purification of women after child-birth. At that time there was at Jerusalem an old man named Simeon, who was full of the Holy Ghost, and had received a secret assurance that he should not die before he had seen Christ the Lord. Accordingly, he came into the temple by the impulse of the Spirit of God, and taking the infant Jesus in his arms, he blessed the Lord; and then addressing himself to Mary, said, "This child is sent for the rising and falling of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; even so far that thy own soul shall be pierced with a sword, that the secret thoughts in the hearts of many may be discovered."

When Joseph and Mary were afterwards preparing to return to their own country of Nazareth, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, bidding him to retire into Egypt with Mary and the child, because Herod had a design to destroy Jesus. Joseph obeyed the admonition, and continued in Egypt till after the death of Herod; when both he and Mary returned to Nazareth, not daring to go to Bethléhem, because it was in the jurisdiction of Archelaus, the son and successor of Herod the Great.

St. Epiphanius believed that Christ's mother followed him every where, during the whole time of his preaching; though we do not find that the evangelists make any mention of her when they speak of several holy women of Galilee who followed him, and ministered to his necessities.

From the third chapter of St. Mark, we learn that, on a certain day, in the year of Christ 34, and vulgar æra 31, as Jesus Christ was teaching in a house at Capernaum, so great a croud of people stood about him, that neither he nor his disciples had time to take any refreshment, which caused a report to be spread abroad, that he had fainted away, or fallen into a swoon: thus Grotius interprets the word *exesle*. The Greek term might insinuate that he was become mad, or had lost his understanding; and the vulgate reads it, *dicebant enim quoniam in furorem versus est*, which our translators have rendered, "They say he was beside himself." The mother of Jesus and his brethren, as it was natural for them, upon hearing such a report, came instantly to seek him, and endeavoured to take him out of the crowd, in order to give him all the relief in their power. It was not the people, we may be assured, who made so wrong a judgment of Jesus; but the ignorant multitude, or the Pharisees, who said in the same place that he was possessed of the devil.

The Virgin, and the brethren or relations of Jesus, came therefore to see what had given occasion to this report. And when they could not get into the house for the throng, they caused a message to be conveyed from one to another, till it was told Jesus, "That his mother and his brethren were at the door, and desired to speak with him." Jesus being accordingly informed of their coming, and that they waited to speak with him, being at that instant engaged in the work of his ministry, preaching the word of God, he made this reply: "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" and looking upon those that were round about him, he said, "These are my mother and brethren;" declaring, that "whosoever did the will of his heavenly Father, the same was his mother, and sister, and brother."

From this time we have no further account of the mother of Christ, till we find her in Jerusalem at the last passover our Saviour celebrated there; which was in the thirty-sixth year of Christ, and thirty-third of the vulgar æra. In this city she saw all that was transacted against him, followed him to mount Calvary, and remained at the foot of the cross during the passion of her blessed Son. We cannot doubt but her soul was at this time pierced through, as old Simeon had prophesied, with the most acute pains, for the death of such a child.

With regard to the age at which Mary died, and the precise year of her death, it is needless to trouble ourselves about this inquiry; since nothing can be said on these matters but what is very doubtful: and they cannot be fixed but at random.

Instead of lessening, as some have done, others have over-magnified Christ's mother, respecting

specting her as a Goddess; and offering up prayers and oblations in her name: and particularly a kind of bread or cakes which the Greeks called *κολλυρα* (or collyrides) whence these heretics were named Collyridians. These were principally a set of women in Arabia, who fell into this kind of idolatry. Epiphanius wrote on purpose to confute this superstition, shewing how the honour due to the blessed Virgin ought to be distinguished from that adoration and worship which are proper to God alone; lest we should glorify the creature instead of the Creator.

Next in order of time came the Nestorians; who attributed too little to the blessed Virgin, denying her the honourable appellation, which the church then, and long before, had given her son Θεοτοκος, that is, "The mother of God," because they would not allow that her Son was God incarnate. They were condemned by a general council held at Ephesus in the year 431. The Eutychian heretics, who quickly followed the Nestorians, ran into the contrary extreme. For, pretending to draw an argument for their heresy from the quality of the mother of God, they gloried in paying her more honour than the catholics. And Peter Fullo, one of the worst of them, who had thrice usurped the see of Antioch, was the first who began to call upon her by way of invocation in prayer; in which he was too grossly followed by those who, on other accounts, condemned him as a heretic; I mean those of the Romish communion.

The Virgin Mary is universally worshipped in the countries where the Romish religion prevails, but no-where with greater pomp of superstition, and splendor of outward veneration, than at Loretto, a city in the marquissate of Ancona, belonging to the ecclesiastical state in Italy, where is an immense profusion of treasure, which has been offered to her at different times by the votaries of that religion in all ages, ever since the Romish clergy have made the belief pass current that the Santa Casa, or holy house (in which the blessed Virgin Mary is said to have been born, saluted by the angel, and brought up her Son till he was twelve years of age, and which the Roman Catholics pretend was, by the ministry of angels, carried through the air from Galilee to Tersato in Dalmatia, on the east side of the Adriatic sea, in the year 1291, and in three years and a half afterwards transported over the gulf of Venice into Italy), was, after two or three short migrations or removals, at length fixed in its present situation at Loretto.

Over this holy house is a magnificent church built, and in it an image of the blessed Virgin placed in a niche with the heavenly infant on her right arm, and a triple crown on her head, the whole state being covered with diamonds and pearls, and round it a sort of rainbow of precious stones of various colours. All the altars, utensils, and ornaments, are immensely rich. The sacristy or treasury is filled with jewels, gold vessels, and ornaments more precious than gold itself; the votive presents of emperors, kings, princes, empresses, queens, popes, and other personages of both sexes, for these many hundred years past: works of silver are not thought worthy to be admitted here. The whole is computed to be worth nine millions of rix dollars. The annual revenue of the Santa Casa in land, &c. is between twenty-seven and thirty thousand crowns, besides presents and votive donations. To this holy house five hundred thousand pilgrims have resorted in one year, between Easter and Whitsuntide; and during two days in September, at the festival of the blessed Virgin's nativity, no less than two hundred thousand have visited Loretto. This prodigious concourse of people was, indeed, before the reformation; but the usual number now is between forty and fifty thousand: and as none of these come empty-handed, we may easily conclude that its riches are still increasing. This is reckoned by all catholic devotees to be the most sacred place under heaven.

Dr. Nichol tells us, that some writers, both in the Greek and Latin church, relate a strange story about the blessed Virgin's assumption into heaven; and that with great variety in their narrative; some affirming her to be conveyed thither alive, like Enoch and Elias; others, that after her death she arose again, and was carried triumphantly into heaven. But all the history of this translation is taken from apocryphal books, which deserve not much credit. And though the church of Rome has adopted this story into her worship, and celebrates it annually with a particular service on the fifteenth of August; yet the authors who support this history, are condemned by all the learned and sensible men of that church.

THE LIFE OF MARY THE SISTER OF LAZARUS.

THE blessed Jesus had a particular affection for this family, and often retired to their house with his disciples. One day, and perhaps the first time that Jesus went thither, Martha received him with remarkable affection, and took the greatest pains in providing a proper entertainment for him; but Mary her sister continued sitting at our Saviour's feet, listening to his words with peculiar attention. This Martha considered as an instance of disrespect, and therefore said to Jesus, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her, therefore, that she help me." But the blessed Jesus justified Mary, by telling her sister, that she had chosen the better part, which should not be taken from her.

Their brother Lazarus some time after fell sick, and his sisters sent to apprise Jesus of the misfortune; but he did not arrive at Bethany till after Lazarus was dead. Martha hearing Jesus was come into the neighbourhood, came to him and told him, that if he had not been absent, her brother had been still alive. Jesus promised her, that her brother should rise again. To which Martha answered, "I know that he shall rise again at the last day." Jesus replied, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die; believest thou this?" Martha answered, "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ the Son of God, which should come into the world." Having said this, she departed, and gave her sister notice privately, that Jesus was come.

Mary, as soon as she heard the welcome tidings, arose and went to Jesus; and, as Martha had done before her, said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." The blessed Jesus was greatly moved at the pathetic complaints of these two worthy sisters, and, on asking where they had buried him, they conducted him to the sepulchre. On his arrival at the place where the body of Lazarus was deposited, the great Redeemer of mankind groaned deeply in his spirit; he wept, he prayed to his Father, and then cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." The dead body obeyed the voice of the Son of God, Lazarus immediately revived, and Jesus restored him to his sisters.

After performing this stupendous miracle, Jesus departed from the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and did not return thither till some days before the passover. Six days before that festival, Jesus came again to Bethany with his disciples, and was invited to a supper at the house of Simon the leper. Martha attended, and Lazarus was one of the guests. During the supper, Mary, to express her gratitude, took a pound of spikenard, a very precious perfume, and poured it on the head and feet of Jesus, wiping his feet with the hair of her head; and the whole house was filled with the odour of the ointment. Judas Iscariot was highly offended at this generous action; but his Master vindicated Mary, and told him, that by this she had prevented his embalment, signifying, that his death and burial were at hand. He moreover added, "Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her," Mark xiv. 9.

We have no account after this of Mary, the sister of Lazarus, in the sacred writings. Several authors, indeed, by not distinguishing properly between Mary the sister of Martha, and Mary Magdalene, say, that she was present at the crucifixion of the great Redeemer of mankind; and also that both she and her sister accompanied the women who went to embalm the body. This is not indeed, probable; but it is certain neither of them is particularly mentioned by the evangelists. The ancient Latins believed, and the Greeks are still of the same opinion, that both Martha and Mary continued at Jerusalem, and died there; and we find that several ancient Martyrologists place their feast on the nineteenth of January.

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH.

THIS disciple, called also Joses, was the son of Mary Cleophas, brother to St. James the Less, and a near relation to the blessed Jesus, according to the flesh; being the son of Mary, the Virgin's sister, and Cleophas, who was Joseph's brother, or son to Joseph himself, as several of the ancients suppose; who have asserted that Joseph was married to Mary Cleophas, or Escha, before he was married to the holy Virgin. Some believe Joseph, the son of Mary Cleophas, to be the same with Joseph Barsabas, surnamed the Just, who is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, and was proposed with St. Matthias, to fill up the traitor Judas's place; but in this there is no certainty at all. We learn nothing particular in scripture concerning Joseph, the brother of our Lord. If he was one of those among his near kinsmen who did not believe in him, when they would have persuaded him to go to the feast of tabernacles, some months before our Saviour's death, it is probable that he was afterwards converted; for it is intimated in scripture, that at last all our Saviour's brethren believed in him: and St. Chrysostom says, that they were signalized for the eminence of their faith and virtue.

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA.

THIS honourable inhabitant of Arimathea, Ramatha, Rama, or Ramula, a city between Joppa and Jerusalem, was a Jewish senator, and privately a disciple of Jesus Christ; he was not consenting to the designs of the rest of the Jews, particularly the members of the Sanhedrim, who condemned and put Jesus to death: and when our Saviour was dead, he went boldly to Pilate, and desired the body of Jesus, in order to bury it. This he obtained; and accordingly he buried it after a very decent manner, in a sepulchre newly made in the garden; which was upon the same mount Calvary where Jesus had been crucified. After he had placed it there, he closed the entrance of it with a stone cut particularly for this purpose, and which exactly filled the open part of it.

Joseph's name is not inserted in the old Latin Martyrologies; nor do we meet with it in the Roman, till after the year 1585. The body of Joseph of Arimathea was, it is said, brought to the abbey of Moyenmontier, by Fortunatus, archbishop of Grada; to which Charlemagne had given this monastery under the denomination of a benefice. Here the body of this saint was honoured, till the tenth age; but then the monastery being given to canons, who continued seventy years there, the relics of this saint were carried away by some foreign monks; and so lost, with many others. The Greek church keeps the festival of Joseph of Arimathea on the 31st of July.

THE LIFE OF NICODEMUS.

HE was one of the disciples of our blessed Saviour, was a Jew by nation, and by sect a Pharisee. The Gospel calls him a ruler of the Jews; and Christ gives him the name of a master of Israel. When our Saviour began to manifest himself by his miracles at Jerusalem, at the first passover which he celebrated there after his baptism, Nicodemus made no doubt but that he was the Messiah, and came to him by night, that he might learn of him the way of salvation. Jesus told him, that no one could see the kingdom of
heaven,

heaven, except he should be born again. Nicodemus, taking this in the literal sense, made answer, "How can a man who is old be born again? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb?" To which Jesus replied, "If a man be not born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." Nicodemus rejoined, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered: "Art thou a master of Israel, and ignorant of these things? We tell you what we know, and you receive not our testimony. If you believe not common things, and which may be called earthly, how will you believe me if I speak to you of heavenly things? Nobody has ascended into heaven, but the Son of God, who came down from thence. And just as Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up on high: for God has so loved the world, that he has given his only Son; so that no man who believes in him shall perish, but shall have eternal life."

Nicodemus, after this conversation, became a disciple of Jesus Christ; and there is no doubt to be made but that he came to hear him, as often as our Saviour came to Jerusalem. It happened, on a time, that the priests and Pharisees had sent officers to seize Jesus, who returned to them, and made this report, that never man spake as he did; to which the Pharisees replied "Are you also of his disciples? Is there any one of the elders or Pharisees that have believed in him?" Then Nicodemus thought himself obliged to make answer, saying, "Does the law permit us to condemn any one before he is heard?" To which they replied, "Are you also a Galilean? Read the scriptures, and you will find that never any prophet came out of Galilee." After this the council was dismissed. At last Nicodemus declared himself openly a disciple of Jesus Christ, when he came with Joseph of Arimathea to pay the last duties to the body of Christ crucified: which they took down from the cross, embalmed, and laid in the sepulchre.

Nicodemus received baptism from the disciples of Christ; but it is uncertain whether before or after his passion. The Jews, being informed of this, deposed him from the dignity of senator, excommunicated, and drove him from Jerusalem. It is said also, that they would have put him to death; but that in consideration of Gamaliel, who was his uncle, or cousin-german, they contented themselves with beating him almost to death, and plundering his goods. Gamaliel conveyed him to his country house, and provided him with what was necessary for his support; and when he died, Gamaliel buried him honourably near St. Stephen.

We are told, his body was discovered in 415, together with those of St. Stephen and Gamaliel; and the Latin church pays honour to all three, on the third of August.

THE LIFE OF NICOLAS.

HE was a profelyte at Antioch, and there converted from the Pagan to the Jewish religion; but the time of his birth is uncertain. After embracing christianity, he became one of the most zealous and holy men amongst the first Christians: so that he was chosen for one of the seven first deacons of the church of Jerusalem. His memory has been tarnished in the church by a blemish from which it has not been possible to clear him hitherto. Certain heretics were called Nicolaitans, from his name: and though perhaps he had no share in their errors nor irregularities, yet he is suspected at least to have given some handle to them. This is what the ancients inform us in this matter. But Clemens Alexandrinus expresses great esteem for Nicolas; and relates the affair quite otherwise. The apostles, says he, having made some reproaches on Nicolas, as being too jealous of his wife, he caused her to come before them all, and declared that any one might espouse her that pleased. This declaration which he made in pure simplicity, and without due reflection, was only designed as a proof of the little attachment and passion he

he had for his wife: and in reality, as St. Clement adds, I have been informed he never cohabited with any other woman.

With regard to his son and his daughters, who lived to a pretty old age, they always remained in a state of perfect virginity. But such as were willing to use the pretence of Nicolas's authority, vindicated themselves by what he had done, in order to abandon themselves to all sorts of irregularity. These heretics, as the same Clemens reports, grounded themselves upon a word which Nicolas let drop, that the flesh ought to be abused. By which, nothing else was meant but that we out to suppress our inclinations to sensuality, and concupiscence; and to mortify the passions and impetuosity of the flesh. Whereas these disciples of pleasure explained the words according to their own sensuality, and not agreeable to the meaning of this apostolic man. Eusebius having related that the Nicolaitans gloried in having Nicolas the deacon as the author of their sect, confutes them by adducing at length this passage of Clemens. Theodoret does the same, and he declares still more openly for the sentiment of Clemens: for excusing the permission of Nicolas, by which he allowed any one to marry his wife, he says, that the deacon had in reality no inclination to permit it; but only intended, by this voluntary offer, to confute those who had raised a murmuring against him.

St. Austin, Victorinus, Petaviensis, Isidorus, and the council of Tours also acquit Nicolas. Cassian says, that some distinguished Nicolas the founder of the sect of Nicolaitans from the person of the same name, who was one of the first seven deacons. Probably he would hint at the author of the Apostolical Constitutions, who says that the Nicolaitans unjustly screen themselves under the authority of Nicolas, one of the first deacons. Our Lord, in two places of the Revelation of St. John, ch. ii. 6, 15, condemns the actions and doctrine of the Nicolaitans. He says, he hates their principles: he makes it a merit in the bishop of Ephesus, that he abhors them; and reproaches the bishop of Pergamus that some of his church adhered to their doctrines.

THE LIFE OF JOHN MARK.

MARK, cousin to St. Barnabas, and a disciple of his, was the son of a Christian woman, named Mary, who had a house in Jerusalem, where the apostles and the faithful generally used to meet. Here they were at prayers in the night, when St. Peter, who was delivered out of prison by the angel, came and knocked at the door: and in this house the celebrated church of Sion was said to have been afterwards established. John Mark, whom some very improperly confound with the evangelist St. Mark, adhered to St. Paul and St. Barnabas, and followed them in their return to Antioch: he continued in their company and service till they came to Perga, in Pamphylia: but then seeing that they were undertaking a longer journey, he left them, and returned to Jerusalem. This happened in the year 45 of the common æra.

In the year 51, Paul and Barnabas preparing to return to Asia, in order to visit the churches, which they had formed there, Barnabas was of opinion that John Mark should accompany them in this journey; but Paul would not consent to it: upon which occasion these two apostles separated: Paul went to Asia; and Barnabas, with John Mark, to the isle of Cyprus. What this Mark did afterwards we do not know, till we find him at Rome in the year 63, performing signal services for St. Paul, during his imprisonment. The apostle speaks advantageously of him in his epistle to the Colossians, "Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, saluteth you. If he cometh unto you, receive him." He makes mention of him again in his epistle to Philemon, written in the year 62, at which time he was with St. Paul at Rome: but in the year 65 he was with Timothy in Asia. And St. Paul, writing to Timothy, desires him to bring Marcus to Rome; adding, that he was useful to him for the ministry of the Gospel.

The festival of John Mark is kept in the Greek and Latin churches on the 27th of September. Some say that he was bishop of Biblis, in Phœnicia. The Greeks give him the title of apostle; and say that the sick were cured by his shadow only. It is very probable

that he died at Ephesus, where his tomb was very much celebrated and resorted to. He is sometimes called simply John, or Mark. The year of his death we are strangers to.

THE LIFE OF CLEMENT.

ST. Paul mentions Clement in his epistle to the Philippians, where the apostle says that his name is written in the book of life. The generality of the fathers, and other interpreters, make no question but that this is the same Clement who succeeded St. Paul, after Linus and Cletus, in the government of the church of Rome; and this seems to be intimated, when, in the office for St. Clement's day, that church appoints this part of the epistle to the Philippians to be read. On the contrary, Grotius is of opinion, that the Clement St. Paul speaks of was no more than a priest of the church of Philippi.

St. Chrysostom thinks that Clement mentioned by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Philippians, was one of the apostle's constant fellow-travellers. Irenæus, Origen, Clemens of Alexandria, and others of the ancients assert, that Clement was a disciple of the apostles; that he had seen them, and heard their instructions. St. Epiphanius, Jerom, Rufinus, Bede, and some others, were of opinion, that as the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul could not be continually at Rome, by reason of the frequent journies which they were obliged to make to other places, and it was not proper that the city of Rome should be without a bishop, there was a necessity to supply the want of them by establishing Linus, Anacletus, and Clement there. The Constitutions inform us, that Linus was ordained by St. Paul; Tertullian and Epiphanius say, that St. Peter ordained Clement. Rufinus tells us, that this apostle chose St. Clement for his successor. But Epiphanius believes, that after he had been made bishop of Rome by St. Peter, he refused to exercise his office, till, after the death of Linus and Anacletus, he was obliged to take upon him the care of the church; and this is the most generally received opinion. St. Peter's immediate successor was Linus; Linus was succeeded by Anacletus; and Anacletus by Clement, in the year of Christ 91, which was the tenth of Domitian's reign.

The church of Corinth having, during his pontificate, been disturbed by a spirit of division, St. Clement wrote a large letter to the Corinthians, which is still extant, and was so much esteemed by the ancients, that they read it publicly in many churches; and some have been inclined to range it among the canonical writings. The emperor Domitian intended to declare war against the church of Jesus Christ; a revelation of his design being made to Hermas, he was ordered to give a copy of it to pope Clement, that he might communicate it to other churches, and exhort them to provide against the storm. We have no certain account of what happened to St. Clement, during this persecution: but we are very well assured that he lived to the third year of Trajan: which is the hundredth of Jesus Christ. His festival is set down by Bede, and all the Latin Martyrologies, on the twenty-third of November. The Greeks honour him on the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth of the same month. Rufinus, and Pope Zosimus give him the title of Martyr; and the Roman church, in its canon, places him among the saints who have sacrificed their lives for Jesus Christ. We read in an ancient history, to the authenticity of which, however, there are some exceptions, that St. Clement was banished by Trajan to the Chersonesus, beyond the Euxine sea: besides other particulars in the history, which we shall not mention, as having too much the air of a fable.

THE LIFE OF MARY MAGDALENE.

THIS Mary was a native either of Magdala, a town in Galilee, on the other side Jordan, or Magdalos, a town situated at the foot of Mount Carmel, and had her surname

name from the place of her birth. Some will have it that she was the sinner mentioned by St. Luke, chap. vii. 36, &c. but this opinion is built only on conjecture. Both St. Matthew and St. Mark tell us, that Jesus had cast out of her seven devils; which some understand in a literal, and others in a figurative sense. But, be this as it may, she became a constant attendant on Jesus, after he had removed her plague. She followed him to mount Calvary, continued amidst the Roman guards at the foot of the cross, with the Holy Virgin, and saw his precious body laid in the tomb. After which she returned to Jerusalem to purchase spices to embalm him as soon as the sabbath was over.

She carried the welcome tidings to Peter and John; and to her our blessed Lord himself first appeared after his resurrection. The apostles did not however believe her report, till it was confirmed by others, and they themselves had seen the risen Saviour.

The sacred writings gave no farther account of Mary Magdalene. But Modestus, archbishop of Constantinople in the seventh century, tells us, that she continued at Jerusalem till the death of the holy Virgin, after which she retired to Ephesus, and lived with St. John till she sealed with her blood the faith she had so long professed. She was buried by the Christians at Ephesus, where her tomb was shewn, in the seventh century. But the emperor Leo the Wise caused her body to be removed from Ephesus to Constantinople, the latter end of the ninth century, in order to its being interred in the church erected to the honour of the apostles.

It is presumed, we have now given the fullest account of the followers of the blessed Jesus; the persons who were chosen and sent as his ambassadors to spread the light of the everlasting Gospel over the whole world, to remove the veil of ignorance and superstition which had been drawn over the kingdoms of the earth; and to teach us the method of attaining eternal happiness in the courts of the New Jerusalem. May we all follow their glorious example, and be endued with their faith, their holy zeal, their patience, and their love! Then shall we pass "through things temporal in such a manner, that we shall finally gain the things eternal," and through the glorious finished work and merits of our all-perfect Redeemer, be admitted as worthy guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb; to live, reign with, adore, and praise him, and at length be made happy partakers of his joy and glory, for evermore! Amen.

A brief ENUMERATION of the APOSTLES and their SUCCESSORS, for the first Three Hundred Years after the CRUCIFIXION.

A N T I O C H.

In this catalogue of the five apostolical churches, we shall place Antioch first, because it is generally admitted that a church was founded in this city by St. Peter, a considerable time before the establishment of that at Rome. The succession of the bishops of this church was in the following order:

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| 1. St. Peter the apostle; who presided 7 years,
or, according to Nicephorus, 11 | 9. Serapio, 25 |
| 2. Evodus, 23 | 10. Asclepiades, 9 |
| 3. Ignatius, near 40 | 11. Philetus, 8 |
| 4. Heron, 20 | 12. Zebinus, or Zebennus, 6 |
| 5. Cornelius, 13 | 13. Babylus, 13 |
| 6. Eros, 26, or, according to Eusebius, 24 | 14. Fabius, or, according to Nicephorus,
Flavius, 9 |
| 7. Theophilus, 13 | 15. Demetrianus, as Nicephorus says, 4:
but Eusebius says, 8 |
| 8. Maximinus, 13 | 16. Paulus |

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| 16. Paulus Samofatenus, 8
17. Domnus, presided 2, as Nicephorus asserts, but Eusebius says, 6
18. Timæus, 8
19. Cyrillus, Nicephorus says, 15, Eusebius, 24
20. Tyrannus, 13
21. Vitalis, 6
22. Philogonius, 5 | 23. Paulinus, or, as Nicephorus calls him, Paulus, 5
24. Eustatius, formerly bishop of Berœa, a learned man, of great eminence in the council of Nice, the first general council, summoned by Constantine the Great, whose time will be the boundary of this catalogue. |
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R O M E.

The establishment of this church is attributed both to St. Peter and St. Paul, the one, as apostle of the circumcision, preaching to the Jews; and the other, as apostle of the uncircumcision, preaching to the Gentiles.

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| 1. St. Peter and St. Paul, both of whom suffered martyrdom under Nero
2. Linus, 12 years
3. Cletus, Anacletus, or Anencletus, some say 9, and others 2
4. Clemens, 9
5. Euaristus, 9, or 13
6. Alexander, 10
7. Xystus, or Sixtus, 10
8. Telesphorus, 11
9. Hyginus, 4, or, as Eusebius says, 8
10. Pius, 11, or 15
11. Anicetus, 9, or 11
12. Soter, or, as Nicephorus calls him, Soterichus, 9, or, as Eusebius says, 7
13. Eleutherus, 15
14. Victor, 10, or, according to Onuphrius, 12
15. Zephyrinus, 8, some say 18, and Onuphrius assigns 20
16. Callistus, or Callixtus, 6, others say 5
17. Urbanus, some say 6, others 4; Eusebius says 5, and St. Jerom, 9
18. Pontianus, some say 3, others 4, Eusebius 5
19. Anterus died before the expiration of a | month after his exaltation to the pontifical dignity
20. Fabianus, 14
21. Cornelius, 2
22. Lucius, 2, others say 3
23. Stephanus, 2 or 3, or, as some say 7
24. Xystus, 1, or 2, or, according to Eusebius, 8
25. Dionysius, 6, 9, 10, 11, and Eusebius extends the time to 12 years
26. Felix, 4 or 5
27. Eutychianus, 1, though Eusebius allows him but 8 months, and Onuphrius says 8 years and 6 months
28. Caius, or, as Eusebius calls him, Gaianus, 11, or, as Eusebius says, 15
29. Marcellinus, 8 or 9
30. Marcellus, near 6
31. Eusebius, 6, some say 4, though Eusebius allows but 7 months, and Onuphrius 1 year and 7 months
32. Miltiades, 2, 3, or 4
33. Silvester, 23, or, as Nicephorus says, 28. He was elected in the year of our Lord 314. |
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J E R U S A L E M.

The church of Jerusalem may in some sense be said to have been established by our Saviour himself, for it was cultivated and improved by the whole college of apostles. The bishops presided in the following rotation:

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| 1. St. James the Less, some say, was constituted bishop by our blessed Saviour, but others are of opinion that the dignity was conferred upon him by the apostles | 2. Simcon, the son of Cleophas, brother to Joseph, our Lord's reputed father. He presided 23 years
3. Justus, 6
4. Zaccheus, |
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| <p>4. Zaccheus, or, as Nicephorus styles him, Zacharias, 4</p> <p>5. Tobias, 4</p> <p>6. Benjamin, 2</p> <p>7. John, 2</p> <p>8. Matthias, or Matthæus, 2</p> <p>9. Philippus, 1</p> <p>10. Seneca, 4</p> <p>11. Justus, 4</p> <p>12. Levi, or Lebes, 2</p> <p>13. Ephrem, or Ephres, or, as Epiphanius styles him, Vaphres, 2</p> <p>14. Joseph, 2</p> <p>15. Judas, 2. This quick succession was owing to the turbulent and refractory spirit of the Jews, who frequently rebelled against the Roman power. Hitherto the bishops of Jerusalem had successively been of the circumcision, the church there being intirely composed of Jewish converts. But the city and temple being laid in a state of desolation, the Jews dispersed themselves into various countries, and the Gentiles were not only admitted members of the church, but even advanced to the episcopal chair. The first of these were,</p> <p>16. Marcus, 8</p> | <p>17. Cassianus, 8</p> <p>18. Publius, 5</p> <p>19. Maximus, 4</p> <p>20. Julianus, 2</p> <p>21. Caianus, 3</p> <p>22. Symmachus, 2</p> <p>23. Julianus, 4</p> <p>24. Elias, 2. Though omitted by Eusebius, this bishop is recorded by Nicephorus of Constantinople</p> <p>25. Capito, 4</p> <p>26. Maximus, 4</p> <p>27. Antonius, 5</p> <p>28. Valens, 3</p> <p>29. Dulichianus, 2</p> <p>30. Narcissus, 4</p> <p>31. Dios, 8</p> <p>32. Germanio, 4</p> <p>33. Gordius, 5</p> <p>34. Alexander, 15</p> <p>35. Mazabenes, 9</p> <p>36. Hymenæus, 23</p> <p>37. Zabdas, 10</p> <p>38. Hermon, 9</p> <p>39. Macarius, ordained in the year of our Lord 315. Nicephorus of Constantinople says, he presided 20 years, but St. Jerom allows a much longer time.</p> |
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BYZANTIUM, afterwards called CONSTANTINOPLE:

This church was established by St. Andrew.

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| <p>1. St. Andrew the apostle</p> <p>2. Stachys, 16 years</p> <p>3. Onesimus, 14</p> <p>4. Polycarpus, 17</p> <p>5. Plutarchus, 16</p> <p>6. Sedecio, 19</p> <p>7. Diogenes, 15. The three latter are not mentioned by Nicephorus of Constantinople, but they are recorded by Nicephorus Callistus</p> <p>8. Eleutherus, 7</p> <p>9. Felix, 5</p> <p>10. Polycarpus, 17</p> <p>11. Athenodorus, 4</p> <p>12. Euzoius, 16; though Nicephorus Callistus says only 6</p> <p>13. Laurentius, 11 years and 6 months</p> | <p>14. Alypius, 13</p> <p>15. Pertinax, 19; but Nicephorus reduces his time to 9</p> <p>16. Olympianus, 11</p> <p>17. Marcus, 13</p> <p>18. Cyriacus, or Cyrillianus, 16</p> <p>19. Constantinus, 7</p> <p>20. Titus, 35 years and 6 months; but Nicephorus Callistus says 37 years</p> <p>21. Demetrius, 21 years and 6 months</p> <p>22. Probus, 12</p> <p>23. Metrophanes, 10. During his government of the church, Constantine removed the imperial court to this place, which he made the seat of his government, calling it by his own name</p> <p>24. Alexander, 23</p> |
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A L E X A N D R I A.

The foundation of this church was established, and a great part of its superstructure raised by St. Mark. Though not strictly an apostle, yet being an apostle at large, and receiving his commission immediately from St. Peter, the church of Alexandria received the honour of being admitted among the apostolical number.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. St. Mark the evangelist, who, according to Nicephorus of Constantinople, presided 2 years 2. Anianus, 22 3. Avilius, 12 or 13 4. Cerdo, 10; or, as Eusebius says, 11 5. Primus, 12 6. Justus, or Justinus, 10 7. Eumenes, 10; or, according to Eusebius, 13. St. Jerom calls him Hymenæus 8. Marcus, or Marcianus, 13; or, as Eusebius says, 10 9. Celadion, 10; or, as Eusebius says, 14 10. Agrippinus, 14, Or 12 11. Julianus, 15, or 10 12. Demetrius, 21; or, as Eusebius, with greater probability, says, 43. He was a man of great piety, and laboured under many troubles, during the persecution at Alexandria. 13. Heraclas, was, upon the decease of Demetrius, advanced to the government of the church, over which he presided 16 years; though Nicephorus of Constantinople, probably mistaking Heraclas for his predecessor, says he governed the church 43 years. 14. Dionysius, 17. In the persecution under Decius, he went first to Taposiris, a small town between Alexandria and Canopus; | <p>then to Cephro, and afterwards to other places in the deserts of Lybia. He died in the twelfth year of the emperor Galienus.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Maximus, according to the computation of Eusebius, presided 18 years; but Nicephorus of Constantinople assigns only 8 16. Theonas, 17; or, according to St. Jerom's version of Eusebius, 19 17. Petrus, 12. He assumed the dignity 3 years before the last persecution, in the ninth year of which he purchased the crown of martyrdom with the loss of his head. Soon after the death of Petrus, Constantine the Great rescued the church from the dreadful calamities in which it had been so long involved, and established it in a state of prosperous tranquillity. 18. Achilles, 9; but Nicephorus of Constantinople allows him only 1 year 19. Alexander, 23. During the government of Alexander, Arius began more openly to promulgate his heretical principles at Alexandria: in consequence of which, sentence of excommunication was pronounced against him; and soon after being banished from Alexandria, he was condemned by the fathers who composed the Nicene council. |
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Extract from Mr. HERBERT'S CHURCH-PORCH.

In earnest be religious, trifle not;
 Act rather for God's sake, than for thine own:
 Thou hast robb'd him, unless that he have got
 By giving, if his glory be not grown
 Together with thy good;—who seeketh more
 Himself than God, would make his roof his floor.

A FULL

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FULL DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

AGAINST ALL

The OBJECTIONS of the JEWS, ARIANS, SOCINIANS, MATERIALISTS, ATHEISTS, DEISTS, INFIDELS, and FREE-THINKERS of the present Age.

C H A P. I.

THE MYSTERIES OF THE GOSPEL.

1. **T**HESE are such discoveries and overtures of knowledge, as the reason of man could never of itself have found out. Had it not been handed down to us from the writings of the apostles, to whom the knowledge of Christ and of the Holy Spirit was so revealed, as to have the privilege of seeing the one, and an extraordinary fellowship with the other in working of miracles; we should never have heard whether there was any Holy Ghost, or an only begotten Son of that God, with whom our reason is now happily acquainted. For "none can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost;" who searcheth the deep things of God, and revealeth them to us. It belonged to God only to constitute the Mediator between himself and man; and the revelation of him, and the things of his kingdom, must necessarily therefore come unto man, as it did, from heaven. In that sense the mystery was certainly above or beyond the reason of man to have found out without an information from above, by a delegation from heaven.

All the collective wisdom and prudence of the wise and prudent of this world, could never have found out that abyss of God's love and wisdom in sending his Son into the world, for reconciling it to himself. And this very well explains John vi. 44. "No man can come unto me, except the Father draw him," i. e. as the next verse shews, unless he is "taught of God." As the words were addressed to the Jews, it is peculiarly true of them, that none will receive Jesus for their expected Messiah, unless they are first convinced out of the Old Testament, wherein they are taught of God concerning him: but it holds good in general, that none other will come to Christ as their Saviour, except they are taught of God, or drawn by the teaching of that Spirit which reveals Christ in the Scriptures:—and "hereby know we the Spirit of God: every spirit or doctrine commanded to be tried, that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God," 1 John iv. 2. This faith cometh only of "hearing the word of God;" not the natural, but the spiritual man is informed of it, 1 Cor. ii. 14. i. e. one who receiveth the revelation of the Spirit. By comparing scripture with scripture, the Jew might arrive at the true knowledge of their Messiah; but the Greek having no taste left but for his modish wisdom, whatever presented itself, not having the current stamp, was scorned as foolishness, and disrelished as babbling: depending wholly upon his natural reason, philosophical deductions, and vain philosophy, he cannot possibly know them that way, before revelation discovers them; they are spiritually discerned, knowable only by revelation from the Spirit; nor can he receive them, as long as he rejects that way of knowing: but admit that way of knowledge, his natural reason plainly discerns them, the case is altered, and the natural man becomes a spiritual man.

The mysteries of the heathen superstition were dark frauds and artifices of certain confederates carrying on imposture for wicked ends; often placing devotion in impurity behind the scenes, and therefore swearing the initiated to secrecy, but always holding it unlawful

lawful to give the profane common worshippers any written knowledge of their mysteries; thus also it was among the ancient Druids, once the oracles of this kingdom. But those of our holy religion all tend to holiness and purity, and are written for the information and edification of all; because it is generally necessary for all to understand plainly the principal truths they import. And so much, in fact, is disclosed to common apprehensions, as is of best use to their repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, for pardon of sin, and access to worship God through his mediation; holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, and the practice of all good works.

II. The mysteries of the Gospel, the eternal purpose (Eph. iii. 11), eternal covenant (Heb. xiii. 20), were gradually revealed and unfolded from faith to faith. The series of *των αἰώνων*, ages and generations, may be reduced to three, wherein a Saviour was promised from the beginning, upon the first occasion, to fallen Adam, "The seed of the woman shall break," &c. and again renewed to Abraham, that "in his seed all nations should be blessed." Faith in this promise saved, and was in force, till faith in the actual performance of it; and that promise was the latent Gospel of the old world, and of the Mosaic dispensation. When, 2. It was further typified and painted out by sacrifices and rites: the Old Testament being as the moon shining, by the light of the unseen sun. 3. When the sun of righteousness actually arose, the Messiah, called the last age, days, &c. Hence it appears that true salvation, i. e. remission of sins through the one Mediator, whom God ordained, is in substance and efficacy one and the same saving truth from the beginning of the world to the end thereof; from fallen Adam to the last man; only the knowledge thereof is more explicit at some time than others; and to some people and nations above others. The Revelation in its last perfection was, according to John i. 16. "Grace for grace," or favour unto favour; the law of Moses a "shadow of good things to come," being a favour under a veil; to uncover which came the valuable favour and open mercy of most gracious truth by Jesus Christ, properly meriting the name of the Grace of God, Tit. ii. 11.

A discovery by degrees, till the effusion of the Holy Ghost after Christ's ascension, has all along been the œconomy of God. The patriarchs and prophets saw comparatively what the apostle saw, and we have read, but through a glass darkly; yet, with their less knowledge were, nevertheless, holy men. Whence it may be inferred, that a general conception, or obscure confused notion of the saving mysteries of faith, is in some cases a saving knowledge; at least, when and where farther degrees of a distinct understanding is not attainable, with respect to the capacities and opportunities of several people. Though the evangelical mysteries are revealed, and in that respect, so far as they are so, not hid to some part of the world, they notwithstanding retain the vulgar acceptance of the word, i. e. unintelligible, to a great part of it; so much of it as the Gospel has yet to instruct concerning those truths. But blessed are our eyes, for we see, &c.

III. It is to be observed, that the mystery of God and the Father, or God the Father, and of Christ; of Christ; of the Gospel; the riches of Christ (Eph. iii. 8); of the glory of this mystery; of full assurance of understanding; all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; the riches of his grace wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence; the mystery of his will; and St. Paul's own knowledge of that mystery displayed unto others; all consist, if we will let the apostle explain himself (Eph. iii. 3, 7, compared with ch. i. 7, 8, 9), in the knowledge of the redemption we have through his [Christ's] blood, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS; revealed to Gentiles, as well as Jews. Other scriptures make the notion of the name of Jesus, i. e. Saviour and Redeemer, to consist in his saving his people from their sins, and the knowledge of salvation [from enemies, the devil and his works] to his people, to be in, by, or for the remission of their sins, Luke i. 77. And consequently the salvation, which the scripture is able to make wise unto, through faith which is in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. iii. 15. and the salvation, which is the END of our faith, 1 Pet. i. 9. in the mystery of Christ, and the Gospel, are the same thing with the forgiveness of sin; the revelation, knowledge, or mystery of one, is the revelation, knowledge, or mystery of the other. This is the prime fundamental of our know-
ledge

ledge therein, therefore called the word, Acts xiii. 26. the Gospel, Eph. i. 13. the way*, of salvation, New Testament, or Covenant; wherein God will save his people.

Would we be informed wherein God hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence of the mystery? It consists in the "Redemption we have through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, Eph. i. 7, 8. Or would we be contented with St. Paul's own knowledge of the matter? he declares it to consist in the same, Eph. iii. 3, 4. compared with ch. i. 7, 8. and confines himself to that point, 1 Cor. ii. 2. and calls his writing of it, the speaking the wisdom of God in a mystery, ver. 7. Would we know the great article of faith to which he would have all nations obedient, to whom the mystery, the preaching of Jesus Christ is made manifest by the scriptures, Rom. xvi. 25, 26; he acquaints us in the beginning of that epistle, ch. i. 3, 4, 5. that it is, concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead.

To the making known this Gospel of God, and of Christ, he declares himself made an apostle; and that it is the power of God unto salvation to all that believe, Rom. i. 16. The Son of God taking our flesh, dying for our sins, and rising again for our justification, being the summary of the Gospel; and the proof of that mystery of Christ, as to both parts of his divine and human nature, Son of God, and Son of man, he wisely reduces moreover to a proved matter of fact, to prevent all philosophical speculation about his being the Son of God.

As Christ was Son of man, *κατα σάρκα ἐν σπέρματι Δαβὶδ*, by taking our flesh (and dying), so was it matter of fact, that he was Son of God also, *κατα πνεῦμα ἀγιοσύνης*, by the resurrection from the dead: there was the power of the proof of it, sufficient for any Christian, that the Holy One who saw no corruption was the Son of God.

All succeeding miracles were wrought in the name of Christ risen, and to attest that truth; and what truth, what fact was ever so well attested by history? For he not only wrought many miracles by his own power, and in his own name (doing others sometimes as the Prophet, the Sent of God, anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power), the abundance of which St. John, in the close of his Gospel, makes a case of record, that he was the Son of God. But the miracle of all was, his raising himself from the dead, as he asserts of his own power to do, demonstration of Omnipotence! therefore doubtless the Son of God.

Would we lastly know what the apostle calls a great mystery (and then we shall have gone through all the scriptures, where mystery is mentioned in reference to Christ, or his divinity), there are but two places, Eph. v. 32. 1 Tim. iii. 16. And if all the other passages apply mystery to practical purposes, and not to theories, even those places, where great is superadded to mystery, will be found still more in the same design, Eph. v. 32. The spirit of revelation condescends to apply the union between the husband and wife to illustrate the intimate love and relation between Christ and his church; but especially that instance of it in the preceding verse, "For this cause shall a man leave his father," &c. "and cleave to," &c. "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church." That is, as the man leaves his father, &c. so Christ left, as it were, his Father to be joined to his church: prodigious love and condescension! And what better argument can be adduced for our love and submission to him?

And "without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh," &c. 1 Tim. iii. 16. The incarnation of our Lord and Saviour is worthily called a great mystery, inasmuch as the real divinity and humanity of Christ, as Son of God, and Son of man, is the great point and corner-stone of christianity.

IV. Let it especially be observed, that the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, notwithstanding they are revealed, are revealed but IN PART. The part that is indeed revealed

* See Acts xvi. 17. which explains those expressions, any of this way, ch. ix. 2. speak evil of that way; no small stir about that way, ch. xix. 9, 23; after the way which they call, &c. ch. vi. 14.

or made known to its proper faculty, the understanding, is so far now not a secret; but a most edifying ground, and the substantiallest reason for piety and virtue that ever was exhibited to the world. And so far as it is discovered, is become a matter of common knowledge, and firm assent of the understanding faculty, which is, in a great measure, the true import of faith in scripture.

As to things revealed, the apostles themselves, writing in the true sublime, or most intelligible character, that belongs to such things as they respect us at present, confess that they knew but *IN PART*, and prophesied (i. e. instructed others, as prophecy often signifies in scripture, and especially in that scripture, 1 Cor. xiv. 1. "Covet earnestly the best gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy, i. e. teach; which is the standing, the useful, and most edifying talent unto others) *IN PART*: assigning the reason from the constitution of things according to the will of God; "when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away," 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10. And if the very secretaries and amanuenses of those celestial discoveries, treating of mysteries and knowledge, spake so of themselves, at the time they were inspired with the Holy Ghost, who led them into all truth, how much more reason have we to confess a partial apprehension!

None of the doctrines of our Saviour were calculated for the gratification of men's idle curiosity, the busying and amusing them with airy and useless speculations; much less were they intended for an exercise of credulity, or a trial how far we could bring our reason to submit to faith: but as, on the one hand, they were plain and simple, and such as, by their agreeableness to the rational faculties of mankind, did highly recommend themselves to our belief; so, on the other hand, they had an immediate relation to practice, and were the genuine principles and foundations upon which all human and divine virtues were naturally to be superstructed.

As the knowledge of Jesus Christ, Son of God, and Son of man, the one Mediator between God and man, is the consummation of divine wisdom, power, righteousness, and godliness, for the redemption of the world, full of the best influence for reconciliation and goodness, peace and good works, and is positively, plainly, and abundantly revealed; how happy had it been, if Christians had always kept to the plain words of revelation, without diminishing what is written, or abounding in vain imaginations above what is written, through luxuriant conjectures and philosophical speculations, never once able to convert the world to righteousness! The churches of God had never known so much distraction and violence, nor the history of it been stained with the names of so many heresies, sects, and divisions, severally setting up to make Christ their Saviour, after their own conceited manner, different from what God has made and presented him, who would therefore have the gift (a most reasonable thing) accepted just as he gives it, without alteration or amendment.

The Carpocratians, Cerinthians, Ebionites, and Gnostics, made him the Son of Joseph and Mary, like all other men: that Christ descended upon Jesus in the shape of a dove after his baptism, and in the end flew away again from Jesus, who suffered and rose again; but Christ continued impassible, as being of a spiritual nature. From them the Docetæ set up the apparition, to the denial of the reality of his human nature, as the Valentinians, &c. The followers of Paulus Samosetanus, with the Socinians, wholly reject his Divine, as Son of God, and constitute him intirely of an human nature. The Sabellians or Patripassians incarnate God the Father, instead of God the Son. The Arians, whilst they allow, diminish both the natures of Christ; his divine, by asserting there was a time when he was not; his human, by substituting the *λογος* in lieu of the rational soul. The Apollinarians denied his rational, whilst they allowed him a sensitive soul. The Nestorians held a slender extrinsic, imperfect union of the divine and human nature, or substance; whilst the Eutychians maintained in opposition, that before the union there were two, but after it no more than one nature.

The two last quarrelled bitterly about the manner of the union, which neither of them understood; and the less they understood, the more they were enraged against one another; and as there was no hopes of converting, they called in blows and the secular arm to devour one another; which finished the catastrophe of the eastern churches: but, that they

they might each be equally punished, the secular arm of Mahomet enslaved them both without distinction, and imposed the heavy yoke of oppressive tribute ever since upon all their poor shattered churches. So miserably have heretics in all ages mangled and divided Christ Jesus into parts and parcels, bits and pieces; in direct contradiction to the fundamental truth of his being perfect God, and perfect man, and so a perfect Mediator between both. What, alas! can be a greater crime or worse sense of heresy, than for the wanton wit of man to go about to put asunder that, for the confusion and devastation of mankind, which God has joined together for their general salvation?

Far be it from God, who does right to all his sincere worshippers and the faculties of all his servants, to expect us to believe, i. e. understand, the part that is abstruse, to which our mind has very difficult, if any access, with the same affection, zeal, and fruitful improvement, as what we do apprehend, perceiving our relation to it, and its influence over us: to bid us see what he has covered with a veil, that be far from God.—If it is in a manner morally impossible for the generality either to know the several schemes and hypotheses of disputers, or make any judgment of those abstruse points when known; that sort of knowledge could never be intended as generally fundamental, nor required of God as necessary to salvation.

It must be impious scandal to truth, and offence to the God of nature, to hear men abuse their own reason, in exclaiming so bitterly, as they do, against mystery in his revelation of divine things. Not only these men, but Mr. Bayle and others, are most immodestly and outrageously guilty of this witless ridicule.

The Coincidence of FAITH and KNOWLEDGE, FAITH and REASON, in Matters of CHRISTIAN DUTY.

Some things, according to the vulgar way of speaking, are said to be above reason, or beyond it; whereby is intimated, that we may be capable of believing farther than we understand. This may be true in a qualified sense; but in strictness of speech, our ideas do really extend as far as faith extends. As there can be no faith without assent, nor any assent but to some intelligible proposition, nor any intelligible proposition without intelligible terms that have proper ideas to answer them; it is evident, that our ideas are of the same extent with our faith, and that we understand as much, and no more or less than we believe.

Of the incarnation of our Saviour, for instance, "God manifest in the flesh," we know, judge, and believe, that he is the only begotten Son of God by nature, that the divine and human nature are united in one Person, the fittest and completest Mediator possible between God and man, for doing every thing related of him; and we know that whatever is possible, the power of God can effect; but how he is the Son of God, or the Son of a virgin, or how those two natures are personally united, we know, judge, and believe nothing at all, because nothing is revealed; and that nothing is revealed is unquestionably, because we cannot understand it at present; or because, if we could, there is no edification in such knowledge; the apostle assuring us, we can be edified by nothing but what we understand, 1 Cor. xiv. But the other is a most religious and interesting truth plainly revealed to common understanding, to traffick withal to eternal life; and that is, by coming to God through him, as the Mediator.

There is an untranspassable gulf fixed between knowledge reserved, and knowledge communicated. There we have our way marked out, as it were with rubrics, on this hand, and on that; directing where we should not, and where we may tread, and for what purpose we are to travel in a road wherein we are all to travel. Our search is prohibited, and all undue temerity restrained that presumes to go beyond its prescribed bounds, in quest of intelligence in things, where intelligence is expressly withheld by the Father of light and wisdom. But as to what is revealed to its proper faculty, the understanding, so far our pursuits and inquiries are animated and encouraged to proceed; more especially

especially when it proposes to draw those uses and improvements which answer the declared purpose of the revelation, "that we may do all the words of this law."

The badness of the deeds having got the mastery over the will, the reasoning faculties are set to work to get mastery over the faith; a prompt willing undertaking to get rid of a belief which they cannot think of without pain! the pain of parting from their lusts, or the grief of not being able to enjoy them under that belief. And having played the fool in being a slave to their sins, must needs be so wise to give the world a reason to justify themselves in print; to make a party, and gather the votes of such as are bad, or worse inclined than themselves. They animate one another. Thus practical infidelity becomes so fruitful a source of speculative controversial infidelity; which is making bad worse, and doubling the folly, by standing to it, and rendering themselves incurable, and unpersuadable; unless, perchance, some remains of honour and ingenuity are left to read and weigh the arguments on both sides; there being shelter in deism for sin, and several flattering covers for iniquity, but none at all in real christianity: they who would lessen the civil war in their own breasts, whilst they are determined to have pleasure in sensual irregularities, are therefore easily proselyted to have no pleasure in the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

But the mischief grows desperate by persevering long to have no pleasure in that truth for the amendment of life; for the God of that truth, not caring to be mocked for his kindness, turns the mock upon them, and gives them up to believe a lye, that they may be damned to gnashing of teeth, 2 Thes. ii. 10, &c. "For this cause" (because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved) "God sends strong delusions, that they should believe a lye, that they all may be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness," *ἐν τῇ ἀδικίᾳ*, i. e. in falsehood (the opposite of it) for being unjust and false to the most instructive saving truth. Do they pretend to be an exception to that common human fallacy, *facile credimus quod volumus*, "we readily believe what we wish?" Do they deserve to have eyes, or the use of eyes, who hate the light of the sun? This judicial blindness, as to moral and spiritual truth, is evident both from the nature of things, and matter of fact. For the will controuling all, and that being bent upon works of darkness, the understanding is made a vassal and a pimp to its iniquitous purposes, and so by long slavery loses its distinctions and direction in moral or divine things; puts darkness for light, and light for darkness; its natural power of judging what is fit to be believed is inverted, and the will takes its place, and believes what it pleases; which accounts for another passage, "By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive."

C H A P. II.

REMARKS ON THE INFINITE VALUE OF THE SACRED WRITINGS; IN WHICH THE TRUTH IS DEFENDED, AGAINST ALL KINDS OF ERRORS.

CHRISTIANITY would appear quite another thing to its opposers, if they would lay aside prejudice, partiality, and the interfering interest arising from indulgence of vicious habits; those hindrances being wilful and of their own chusing, they are guilty of not suffering it to appear what it is; and if they say they see it as it really is, and receive it not, their sin remaineth. And that saying will be verified, if the Gospel, after it is so revealed, is hid, "it is hid only to those that are lost," to all reception of it: and also incur that other threatening, "None of the WICKED shall understand, but the WISE shall understand," 1 Dan. xii. 10. their mind grows reprobate, or undiscerning, as in the original, Rom. i. 24. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

This is confirmed by history, and matter of fact. Our Saviour told the Jews, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life," John iv. 40. Their unbelief lay in their will, and proceeded from it; they were so unreasonable then, and are to this day lost in perverseness

ness and obstinacy; which is no otherwise accountable for, but, as above-mentioned, that nothing that then appeared before their understanding could convince it; no, not even the sight of miracles. They are so notorious an instance, as need not be insisted upon; nor yet our Lord's declaration, that the miracle of one rising from the dead would be ineffectual to convince a resolved infidel, set against the faith of revelation. This has been often urged with great advantage. But if they will not believe that, they will, it is hoped, give credence to a dictate of reason and common experience from one of their own moralists and apostles (Aristotle), that irregular pleasure is a cause of infidelity, and corruptive of principles of reason. However, they cannot refuse belief to their own oracle, the noble author of character, when he says, "There is a certain perverse humanity in us [Deists] which inwardly resists the divine commission, though ever so plainly revealed." It respects a particular instance, but is no less true, from him, with regard to the whole revelation. Here is the secret of Deism blabbed out by one of the subtlest opposers of revelation that ever wrote.

Spiritual libertines have as much to answer for as sensual; and seem to have the most deadly disease upon them: I mean, a moral apoplexy, occasioned by the great redundancy of bloating sufficiency. And as this sufficiency and fulness of SELF sets itself in opposition to humble self-knowledge and self-government, and renounces dependence upon God for knowledge or conduct; it must be most destructive to man, and no less hateful to God: it must be the most pernicious and fatal of all schemes both to the honour of God, and good of men.

It is not one of your intermitting vices, such as wrath, drunkenness, lust, gluttony, which have some lucid intervals, and leave the sinner certain seasons to recollect and recover himself to better practice: but this disease is of the unintermitting kind, a continued high fever of soul, always thinking more highly of self than ought to be thought, less respectfully to God's honour, and submissively to his ways with mankind; deflowers God of his glory, and lays waste the salvation of souls, and good of mankind. Perverse obstinacy, inconsideration, haste, anticipation, partiality, presumption, particular envy, groundless aversion and prejudice, unreasonable bigotry or fondness, have as malign and perverting an influence upon the understanding, as the more immediate lusts of the flesh*. Isaiah (xxix. 9) represents the Jews as "drunken, but not with wine; they staggered, but not with strong drink;" and the apostle lays in the caution of being sober-minded, which supposes that there is spiritual drunkenness and filthy irregularities in the mind, whereof the body has no share.

The pride of genius ever delights to parade in a superiority of understanding, by censuring, and endeavouring to pull down what the united wisdom of the public has approved of, and concurs in submitting to, as most reasonable and beneficial to the community. This is the judicious observation of the Bishop of London; his words are, "Others are led, by pride and self-conceit, to raise doubts and disputes concerning any opinions and doctrines which are generally received and established, how evident soever it may be that the doctrines they oppose are agreeable to all the principles of virtue in general, and of christianity in particular. Such men disdain to think in the common way, and, valuing themselves upon a more than ordinary share of knowledge and penetration, always affect novelty and singularity in opinion. Which opposing humour was well expressed by one of our modern advocates for infidelity, in what he is reported to have said of one of his fellow-labourers to this effect, "That if his own opinions were established to-day, he would oppose them to-morrow." So sweet and intoxicating withal is the pre-eminence of a leading party, though in the wrong, and to an ill end, and through labyrinths of error!"

* Pride and revenge are immoralities within; which bend the mind as strongly as any other vices in the world. Personal prejudice will often put a bias upon it, as powerful as debauchery; and pique and resentment, will hinder eye-sight itself, and turn the plainest evidences into doubts, and often into falsehoods, with the man that is actuated by them.

This dissatisfied spirit of opposing the divine establishment in heaven, among the several orders of beings, seems to have been the sin of the angels who fell, and found no repentance; but it is the prayer of Christians, that these men may repent in time. Meanwhile, their opposing spirit is punished with the notorious guilt of self-contradiction and inconsistency; and they have been able to produce no other proof of the self-sufficiency of their reason, than the defect of reason, and minute philosophy in abundance, with a notorious design of subverting the religion of nature they pretend to favour, and levelling every thing to Atheism.

These men indeed talk of the law of nature, benevolence, love of God and virtue, &c. but it is nothing, as we have shewn, but talk and pretext, to pull down christianity, and, with that, root up natural religion. For what signifies pretending to the end, whilst they wilfully divest themselves of the means? No day, no place, no person for public worship: therefore it can be no religion of the end to them, since they never meet together, in a religious way, to carry it on; God is only a private notion, not a public God to them. And if they hold communion with Christians, they hold it in dishonourable hypocrisy.

He that is of God, and holds not natural truth in unrighteousness, "heareth God's words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." If ye believe in him to any purpose, ye will believe also in me; but he that has, and cherishes the spirit of unrighteousness, will, for so long, cherish the spirit of Antichrist, or resistance to the Gospel, in himself; and that man, throughout all ages of it, will ever want integrity towards its truths, who is defective in his integrity towards its purifying design. It will never carry evidence with it, whether internal or external, sufficient to convince and proselyte such a person; though that evidence should be double to what it is, were that possible.

Introducing new unscriptural terms into the faith once delivered to the saints has been practised; for the defeating of which, councils have been able hitherto to find out no better method, at least they have tried no other, than piously to superadd to the faith other antagonist terms; not so much because they are to be met with in scripture, as because they import a meaning ineffectually contrary, and are a preservative against those expressions and sentiments which first began the innovation.

It will ever be that corrupt manners, in part resolved upon in some instance or other, will ever be resolving upon a corrupt creed to support them. For instance, the more the greatness of the person, whom God sent into the world to take away sin and give it life, is lessened and degraded, the more that, by a direct tendency, lessens our notion of God's hatred of sin; our perception of his love of the world; and our confidence of access, and acceptance; of remission of sins, and eternal life; and consequently, the corresponding practice, depending upon the influence of those truths, will all be proportionably lessened and abated, i. e. our aversion and avoidance of sin, our love and gratitude to God, our repentance, will be more slow and indifferent, and our devotion colder and less frequent. So that whoever espouses these diminutions of virtue as choice, is violently inclined, and too often carried up and attached in creed by way of justification, to the lessening, degrading notions of the Son of God. Though it is plain they ought not to use such liberty, seeing in reality the end of such liberty, how much soever it may be cloaked over with words, is a cloak of maliciousness; there is malice at the bottom against the full extent of the commandments regarding the religion of the means for perfecting the religion of the end, at the same time they continue to compliment and flatter the commands regarding the last.

Obedi, & credidisti, "obey, and thou hast believed," is a famous Socinian maxim; and again Socinus disparages it at a very low rate. "Faith, as it applies assent of the understanding to the truths of the Gospel, is not of necessary obligation, but a kind of ornament at best, rather than matter of real use; admit it brings some small advantage with it, yet the want or absence will be attended with no great inconvenience; you may say of it, as one did of the art of poetry, *Si adest laudo, si abest non multum vitupero*; "if present, I commend it; and if absent, I don't much blame it;" what is said of meats may be said of that, 1 Cor. viii. 8. it commendeth not to God; neither if we believe are we the better, neither if we believe

believe not are we the worse, *modo vitæ sanctimonia salva sit* * : that is, provided the life be holy.

But this is arguing upon a most absurd, preposterous supposition, putting the effect before the cause, and making it independent of it; gathering fruit without a tree: and recommending virtue without any principle of virtue. For though it is ever so true, that the excellency of faith, and the value of all revealed knowledge is to be estimated from its design and tendency to better men's repentance, prayers, and practices; and the measure of errors to be regarded from its tendency to corrupt and spoil any of these (immorality, transgressing the religion of the end, being certainly the greatest heresy, and a self-condemnation by nature); yet it does not follow that the end can be accomplished without competent means, or a moral effect be produced without a moral cause.

Nature may rebel against principle; but where there is no principle to controul the rebellion, there can be nothing but anarchy, with all the licentiousness of misrule. A man may sometimes be worse than his belief, and recover himself; but it is as impossible for him ever to be better, as for the stream to rise higher, or be better in quality, than its fountain-head. Health and poison may as well consist together, in the same constitution, as the safe way to salvation, and a wilful corruption of the faith of Christ, in a meditated departure from its true use and application for working out our own salvation.

There are doubters of this faith, sceptics by principle. I would observe a few things of the unreasonable, absurd conduct of these sort of men, before I give a direct answer. They doubt the principles of the Atheist, and no less doubt the principles of the four sorts of Deists as enumerated by Dr. Clark. In short, the principles of all religions, Jewish, Mahometan, Pagan, Christian, are equal matter of doubt to a thorough sceptic. His religion is, to doubt of all religion to the end of his days; and so long as he continues to do so, is in as bad, or rather worse state than the Atheist, who rejects them all. This last acts with some consistency, sins by maxim and principle, having no restraint but the laws of his country, and the outward appearance of false variable honour, without any disturbance from any religious principle; and takes care to screen himself under the softer name of Deist, as long as the other appellation is shocking and odious in sound.

But the Sceptic neither says in his heart there is no God, nor says, there certainly is one: he neither denies, nor affirms; and so has all the inconveniences of denying, without any of the benefits of affirming and using. He practises upon no religious principle, natural or revealed: his principle is, still to postpone his intentions of being satisfied as to the truth some time hereafter; a worse fallacy than deferring repentance to a death-bed; for then they have the principle to seek, and must be satisfied whether it is a duty or not. All the time they should employ in obeying a plain law for the good of themselves and the world, they spend in forming syllogisms about law and obedience; and so live without law. If they do any laudable action, it must be by chance, or from some foreign motive, never out of design; there being no fixed principle to design upon, and where that is not, there can be no virtue; for "whatsoever is not of faith, is sin." And as they live void of consistency, and all care of themselves, either as to the principles, or consequences of their actions, how can the care of others do them any good, farther than endeavouring to convince them of a folly and absurdity that exceeds all that is to be found among moral agents, I mean mankind? for they may, perhaps, doubt whether they are moral agents, or not.

The Sceptic, in order to avoid a too great credulity which he laughs at, runs into the

* Edward's Preservative, part iii. p. 35. See more of these sentiments in Reland's Critical Reflections on Mahometism and Socinianism, p. 236. And it is pretty observable what the same author, p. 204, remarks of the apostate emperor Julian, that he embraced the sentiments of Aetius (whilst he was a Christian) which consisted in opinions very little differing from Photianism, i. e. Socinianism. So near is the affinity, and so easy the transition or apostasy from Socinianism to Deism. The rational catechism, and most of their writings I have met with, drop all use of Christ as a mediator, &c. and the very mention of a new covenant, which is the most certain original foundation of christianity. Though some of their books retain the mention of Christ as mediator of intercession in heaven, yet was it possible for God, who never does an improper thing, to appoint a mere man in their sense to be mediator there, he could be no more, in the nature of things, than an incompetent, partial, half mediator; and, without omniscience and omnipresence to the hearts of all men, could not be capable of discharging the office of mediator *ex parte*.

contrary extreme, the worst extravagance of understanding, a more ridiculous weakness than the former, and, at the same time, a most pernicious impudence in denying the use of any truth in society, how constant, useful, and indubitable soever the truth is; and, rather than be at the pains, or bear the requisite attention for separating mistakes and dross of error, he foolishly throws the gold and truth away together, and so impoverishes and strips his understanding of that which was made to adorn and enrich it, to preserve and guide it.

Though these infidels are so scrupulous as to carry the doubting humour to every thing without them, yet it is madness to doubt their own existence, or the truth of what they feel within themselves; if any thing has a title to the feeling sense of reality, it must be that: but if the truth of that is allowed, the truth of what is without unavoidably follows, because what is without concerns, and is relative to, what is within.

The disputes among Christians are to him no manner of justification. For they are nevertheless agreed in practising upon fundamentals: but he allows no certainty even as to them; affects the disputing humour perpetually, and comes to no resolution; and therefore, being divided between two contrary interests, is distracted and torn in pieces by his own doubts, and tossed in mind perpetually like a wave of the sea, unstable in all his ways; not having the satisfaction of following the Lord, in case he is God; nor yet of following Baal, in case he is the God. And this vertigo of opinions, and vanity of disputing every thing, takes the heart quite off from making any application, or forming any purpose of practice; and thus the whole life passes, and evaporates in speculation, for speculation sake, without any thought of the true use of it; with the greatest dissatisfaction in life, and, at the same time, the least reputation, as being void of all sense and good conduct, robbing himself of the true use of his own understanding, and of all benefit of truth and knowledge; which is nothing else than "to exert his faculties in order to prove himself the most egregious fool in the world." There is neither seed-time nor harvest in his calendar; if it was not for the faith of his neighbours, he would be starved.

It is impossible for him to answer to himself the hazard he runs; for, if the truths of christianity are but possible, he acts not wisely; if probable, very imprudently; if certain, his conduct is most miserable, enthusiastic, and mad. And, as to the capacity of raising a dispute, there is no honour nor reputation in it, unless it is the credit of excelling others in vain-glory, perverseness of spirit, and a bad heart joined to a good memory and voluble fancy, bent upon the worst purpose, of unsettling every thing valuable in human society; every thing more or less being capable of dispute, mathematical demonstration excepted.

The sight of miracles, particularly that great one, "Christ risen from the dead," is, by implication, affirmed in the record of them to be infallible proofs; and they undoubtedly are so. The conviction they bring to the beholder is so rousing, and in a manner irresistible; that, one would imagine, they could never fail of necessitating assent to the truth of the doctrines they were brought to prove; yet we know, some of the beholders of many of them, rather than receive the doctrines, absurdly imputed that very proof to a quite different author, the greatest adversary to the doctrines in the world. And if such a proof is resistible, it follows, that miracles seen work conviction only in a moral way; and that miracles believed and undenied as to the matter of fact of them, soon after they were seen, and so to the end of the world, will produce no conviction upon those who will not embrace the doctrines; and that evasions against that testimony, though never so undeniable, will ever be offered by such, in excuse for not embracing.

This is notorious with respect to Celsus, Julian, Porphyry, those bitter, potent, learned enemies of the Christian doctrine. They acknowledged the matter of fact, of miracles being really wrought and were no imposture, in those who testified the faith; yet had no effect, nor ever will have upon any resolved enemy to such doctrines, determined to continue bad, because they are too good, and too contrary to them, to be received. Therefore it need not be added, that if the truth of those miracles could not be objected to, then, when the circumstances of time, persons, places, were all recent, and no opportunity nor ability wanting to have detected the forgery, they must remain undeniable and invincible to all ages after. How absurd therefore is that sceptical insinuation, "There being at present

no immediate testimony of miracle or sign in behalf of holy writ—That the holy records themselves were no other than the pure invention or artificial compilement of an interested party, in behalf of the richest corporation and most profitable monopoly which could be erected in the world.”

It must be a very foolish and inconsiderate credulity to imagine, that any after apparition from the dead should ever be able to make that more certain than our Lord ever intended it should be, to future generations; or, that it can be any thing less than a disparagement to him, and his Gospel, to be willing to call in afresh the evidence of sense, after that had been so irrefragably established by his own resurrection from the dead; and he has determined, and given the preference, in addressing and limiting the persuasion of his Gospel to the reasoning, more than to the seeing faculties of his Christians. Was an apparition from the dead in every age and place, any divine argument of a future state, where there is a standing revelation not only of Moses and the prophets, but of Christ and his apostles, every Christian has a right to expect it: but as they are forbidden to expect it, there is the less reason for any to pretend to those officious proofs, or for others to believe the report.

The virtue of believing consists in being morally, and therefore dutifully, satisfied of the truth of things not cognizable to our personal senses, which concern us as moral agents; and most moral truths are of this nature. Mathematical demonstration shews the subject of its science to be true, from the impossibility of its being otherwise. What thanks, what virtue in believing what one cannot help, or hinder believing? But as the will can, and does help or hinder believing in the other case, unbelief is a sin, and belief a virtue, where there is sufficient evidence: and as there is more of will, than understanding, in matters of plain, practical faith, there sin and duty, reward and punishment, are annexed to the transgression or obedience of faith.

No man can have any inclination that mathematical demonstration should not be true; being opposite to nothing that he chuses or refuses, as a moral agent. But when the evidence of the other sort, as cogent in its kind, as the other in its kind, happens cross to inclination irregularly indulged, we know what a bad chance it stands, of being received: here the will is particularly affected in the reigning interest of its purposes, and puts itself into an opposing or refusing posture; but being unconcerned in the other truth, because no moral good or evil issues from it, it has nothing to object.

What gives the moral certainty, is of like nature with that, in many cases, which affords mathematical certainty, i. e. if the contrary supposition involves a moral absurdity, or impossibility in the general course of human belief, safely trusting unseen things to be true; which is so absolutely necessary in the world, and is the law that holds society together, in its essential-mutuality of trust. If it is morally impossible it should be otherwise, with respect to the first testifiers of the Christian faith, or their conveyance of it to others, that they should be deceived themselves, or have any design of deceiving others; supposing mankind to act upon the common known principles which influence their actions, and their own faculties to be so commonly true as not to deceive them; then the moral certainty of the truth of their testimony, and the conveyance of it to us, is unexceptionable.

When the Sceptic practises his doubts upon the principle of believing nothing certain, nor any persons, nor any record to be sufficiently credible, because there is a natural possibility of deception; he acts upon a principle that dissolves, by suspending the obligations to moral duties; he does his best to bring ruin and confusion into society; and overthrows all history, all science, all trust in the world: which being so dreadful an absurdity, and so great a contradiction to the perfections of God the author and governor of society, against his suffering such an evil and deception in the world, it must be morally impossible that such a principle can be right or true; and therefore belief upon sufficient evidence is morally certain and authentic. But to offer to support such a principle by testimony of former times, is intolerably worse; because that is acknowledging the validity and the sufficient evidence of testimony, when it makes for them, and doubting it always, as often as it makes against them.

Mr. Hobbes himself is forced to allow "the admitting propositions upon trust in many cases, to be no less free from doubt than perfect and manifest knowledge: for as there is nothing whereof there is not some cause, when there is doubt, there must be some cause thereof conceived. Now there be many things which we receive from report of others, of which it is impossible to imagine any cause of doubt: for what can be opposed against the consent of all men, in things they can know, and have no cause to report otherwise than they are (such is the greater part of our histories), unless a man would say, that all the world had conspired to deceive him." Now, though the testimony is never so plainly from God, and the record thereof supported by the most unexceptionable historical evidence (which is all the evidence the truest narration is capable of, nor is there any evidence or truth of things surer than that of some history), still, it is in the power of man, especially under the bias of irregular affection, or culpable prejudice, to suspend his assent to truths never so well attested, and conveyed; by not suffering his understanding to attend sufficiently, if at all, to the credibility, or importance of the things spoken of; regarding neither the internal, nor external evidence that evince their certainty, and their excellency. And such is their excellency, the less the truth concerns us, the more fallible and various will human judgment ever be; the more generally important those truths are, so much the clearer the perception, so much the more certain and unanimous the judgment.

It is abominably shameful in the author of "Christianity as old," &c. barely to repeat the stale objection of various readings in diminution of the credit of the conveyance of those truths: especially, when it is confessed on all hands, that no one matter of fact, or faith, or practice, in any of the material things that concern salvation, are in the least affected by them; but all remain as intire as if they came fresh from the apostles' hand-writing. They themselves overlook abundantly more various readings, in every profane author of like antiquity, as no impeachment or objection at all.

Besides, there is a further moral assurance to Christians, in common, and security enough against any doubting, from monumental practice grounded upon the first establishment, for preserving the memory from father to son, from age to age, in the observation of baptism, the Lord's supper, and the Lord's day weekly; which hand down the death, resurrection, and the other great articles of our faith. The resurrection of Christ, and ascension to heaven, is moreover an easy, short, effectual argument to every plain Christian, of the resurrection of our bodies, the immortality of the soul, and a future state, beyond any laboured proof.

Nor does the moral certainty of the evidence of faith diminish by progress of time. For with respect to that first and primary care, there is, besides the providence of God, the moral argument from the principles mankind always act upon, in the constant and common concern of transmitting to posterity important facts and truths, which concern others as much as themselves. And if men are so careful of transmitting to posterity Greek and Roman history of worldly transactions, when, by the common vicissitudes of earthly dominion, the concern of after-ages will indeed diminish, and die away, in process of time, in proportion to their distance; can they neglect to transmit that, with equal care, wherein themselves were so deeply interested, and latest posterity no less?

The interest and concern that posterity may have in recorded facts, is one thing; and the truth and certainty of those facts, quite another: the former indeed may, through distance of time and place, dwindle into nothing; whilst the other remains, and will, as long as the record lasts, for ever remain as true and certain, as at the first recording; if true then, it must always continue so. Accordingly, who doubts the Greek, Roman, or other authentic histories, any more now, than a thousand years ago, whilst our immediate concern in any of them is worn out and come to nothing? But in the other case, the truth and the concern are the same, and will remain so to the end of the world; I mean, that men ought ever to shew the same concern for truths they may be morally certain of, and are as much interested in, as those that first committed them to writing.

If the certainty of those things, whereof they affirm, loses any thing of its force and conviction by succession of time, it must proceed from the diminution of the reasons, and

and declension of the attesting circumstances, which made the first witnesses and testifiers credible. But if none of these has lessened or varied, nor can lessen or vary to the latest ages; then the truth will be as well testified to the latest posterity (considering the assistance of printing) as it was at first; one day in that case certifieth another: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. If they were eye-witnesses of the facts at first, they will continue the very same, before the eyes of all the reading, and to the ears of all the hearing world, to the consummation of all things. If they were not only capable, but honest, faithful, consistent witnesses; not only honest and consistent among themselves, but confirmed from heaven by the power of working miracles; not only confirmed from thence, but like lambs among wolves, endured all affliction and laid down their lives for the testimony: if their testimony was not only not contradicted, but co-attested by co-temporary foreign history of other nations: and if all these were the ratifying reasons, and ascertaining circumstances of the truth at first, they will continue in the same force of persuasion and conviction for ever; nor will they ever be spent or exhausted: because they remain recorded and represented in the same unvaried state, for ever.

Not to mention from progress of time the increasing addition of attestations, from the gradual fulfilling of prophecies, which remotest posterity will have the advantage of; and consequently that progress of time, instead of invalidating, will accumulate strength to the evidences of christianity, and banish infidelity from off the earth, by the all-convincing lustre of its truth, in the experience of so many ages. The farther the stream of prophetic and eventual truth runs from its spring head, the first promise of God to man, the larger it grows, it bears down all denial, and drowns scepticism (laying hold of every twig to save itself), very deep.

It may be concluded, therefore, with respect to the Sceptics, that they are not only inexcusable to themselves, but criminals against God and society; by considering such important truths and such sufficient evidences of them carelessly and negligently; suspending all proper resolution, and affecting always to doubt the truth: though if they allow any one thing to be certain, suppose their own existence, if they have not the assurance to doubt of that, this will be sufficient to confute and confound the absurdity of their humour. The certainty of their own existence unavoidably proves the certain existence, the nature and attributes of God; whence follows the truth of religion, the refutation of what is false, the fixing and ascertaining and the clearing up of all doubtfulness, in what is most valuable and interesting. But it is certain they are secret, though undeclared enemies of the faith, not openly throwing off friendship to it, whilst they retain hatred at the heart, and consequently in their actions and conduct are worse than the Deist, who is an open avowed adversary: and therefore it is inconsistent in the latter, after they have openly declared themselves enemies and rejecters of faith, to put on the Sceptic in their argument; for that is rejecting absolutely and retaining it, at the same time, at least in the appearance of suspense.

IV. There are NEGLECTERS of this faith among the outward professors of it. As the three former are guilty of immorality through a vicious will, rejecting or corrupting or suspending assent to the faith; so these are guilty, by suspending practice suitable to it. These are the most numerous, and too many of them the seminary of the other; having a tendency and disposition to grow up in time into some of the former. When an age is very much degenerated in practice contrary to its principles, it is naturally inclined and prepared to receive principles that are more favourable to such practices, and people so disposed can hardly miss of them, as they so openly proffer themselves every-where; and as they spread and are imbibed, the overflowing of ungodliness rises so much the higher in its stream, and will bear no controul.

A dubious life, made up of ebbs and flows of virtue and vice, may very well become a dubious faith of a future state, as was the case of the heathen philosophers; but, without all doubt, it ought to be otherwise settled with Christians.

The primitive Christians considered attentively the holy truths and duties of christianity, understood them, and applied them vigorously as the most divine means, true in proof, potent in effect to that end; which made their lives and their faith so gloriously shine before

before men, being zealous of good works; suffering any thing for its sake, and so adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; neither being ashamed of Christ, nor a shame to him, in any thing; then did his religion personally shine forth in a convincing, divine, irresistible evidence. Their baptism, as it ought, did indeed represent to them their profession, which is to follow Christ and be made like unto him, dying unto sin and rising to righteousness, and daily proceeding in all godliness and virtue; and the Lord's supper, or breaking of bread frequently, refreshed them, comforted them, and helped to make them "fervent in spirit serving the Lord." Faith in the mediatorial kingdom had a despotic rule over those hearty subjects, for improvement and perfection in godliness, and goodness; it had a lordly dominion over the disciple; when he took the name of Christian, he submitted, as to his sovereign Lord, the after-conduct of his will. Words, and deeds, they were all cheerfully and absolutely controuled by its laws: they never lost sight of their solemn engagements; they daily remembered them as the capital maxim of their conduct: whilst now-a-days every seditious tribune of self-sufficiency, or inordinate affection, disputes the authority; or is very indifferent to the government; makes sacramental resolutions, in order to remember them no more, or be nothing the better for them. The degrees of faith, in the ordinary course of providence, will ever arise out of the greater or less degree of men's assenting to, and putting them also in use as such, to such purpose.

The modern reason why the lives of so many Christians are unlike their holy profession is, because they don't examine the grounds and the nature of their faith, to know the certainty and the purport of it, for giving it an effectual force upon their minds, in referring its indubitable design to holy and righteous practice; they have but an half-persuasion of the certainty of it, though attested with a full evidence; they afford an indolent assent in general that such things may be, rather than that they assuredly are, and that our salvation and happiness depend upon the right reception and application of them; a method of not disbelieving, rather than believing in good earnest, or to any purpose. How very many in these kingdoms have been educated in the Christian religion, yet how very few have embraced it as the effect of a deliberate choice? They bestow their simple approbation as on a fashion or custom of their country, and had they been born and brought up in any other, of another persuasion, they would have done the very same; and therefore if the fashion of the faith should vary, or threaten a variation by the desertion of numbers, they are ready to come into it: because, as a personal, obligatory, covenanted, saving thing, they regard it not at all. This is that frequent, fruitless, feigned faith, the reverse of that unfeigned faith which is appointed to head a pure conscience. And what pity it is, what reproach and scandal to the reason of many Christians, that their continual inconsideration, negligence, and carelessness in those things which they profess they do believe, and which they acknowledge they can do, should so constantly, and with so much aggravation, undo so many of them! They either consider them not as what they are, means, but as what they are not; and so rest in them, as the end, *παρεργον εργον*; as able to acquit them of the moral law, or dispense with some disobedience, or raise hope of justification, or, through some other false defeating opinions mixing with it, defeat its intention. Or, if they take them to be means, they nevertheless employ them not at all, or negligently and by fits and starts; and so either way shame their profession, and so relinquish the serene benefits, comforts, and heavenly benedictions of their faith, for the horrible accusation and condemnation thereof.

That animadversion may possibly be too just, with respect to some few, "who went from church to chapel, from chapel to church, and were punctual in all church ceremonies, without regarding the end for which they could be instituted: so that instead of being humble, affable, and good, they have proved big with the worst sort of pride, spiritual pride; censuring and despising their neighbours, though ever so good, if they were not as punctual as themselves in observing those things; and the conceit they had of their own godliness, has made them as troublesome at home as abroad, as bad wives as neighbours."

"A man enlightened with philosophy, says Socrates, ought to die with courage and a firm hope, that in the other world he shall enjoy a felicity beyond any thing in this.—The soul repairs to a being like itself, a being that is divine, immortal, and full of wisdom, in which it enjoys an inexpressible felicity, as being freed from its errors, its ignorance, its fears, its amours that tyrannized over it, and all other evils retaining to human nature. That souls purged with philosophy are received into yet more admirable and delicious mansions, which I cannot easily describe;" and concludes, "What I told you, is sufficient to shew, that we ought to labour all our life-time to purchase virtue and wisdom, since we have so great a hope and so great a reward." And, with respect to promise, there is a very remarkable passage in the same dialogue: "If both ways [of learning truth from others, or finding it ourselves] fail us, amidst all human reasons, we must pitch upon the strongest and most forcible, and trust to that as to a ship, while we pass through this stormy sea, and endeavour to avoid its tempests and shelves; till we find out one more sure and firm, such as a promise or revelation, upon which we may happily accomplish the voyage of this life, as in a vessel that fears no danger."

There is the truth of the Godhead to be learnt from his works; there is the relation they stand in, and the obligation of duty to be gathered and bosomed up from the respects and circumstances, expectant of a future account they are placed in to God, their neighbour, and themselves; there is the long-suffering continual goodness of divine Providence in the distribution of fruitful seasons, filling their heart with food and gladness,—a gladness, from which they might plainly reason out an encouraging prospect of securing his favour for the better things of life hereafter, in some after-provision for the better and more durable part of man.

What though the reason of the men of their country and nations round about was refused, or abused by hereditary national idolatry, superstition, and gross immoralities, still there was personal consideration and fidelity of reason left (and "he that is faithful in a little, is faithful also in much") to have made it equal to M. Antonius, Socrates, and Epictetus, one in the highest, the other in the middle station of life, the third a poor slave. Though they knew not the particular way and method of reconciling the pardoning mercy with the punishing justice of God, they might be so sure in general, from the goodness of God, that there was some medium for that; so as to keep any innovator from the first beginning, and through all series of times, from the presumption of inventing, appointing, and multiplying mediators, the irrational source of all superstition and idolatry.

If God is a rewarder (the greater always including the less), that consideration implies and infers, that he is a pardoner, that he is disposed to be an encourager; that there is an assister, that there is most likely a gratuitous intercessor and well-appointed mediator; and, according to the expectation and philosophic prayer of Socrates, that he will, in due time, become an instructor.

The modern Deist might clearly argue, that the invisible Godhead, an all-present and all-seeing Spirit, could never be like the representations that the devices of men, foolish in wisdom, and vain in their imaginations, could impart to silver or gold, or other materials; that it must be very absurd and preposterous to confine and confound such a Being with such stuff, or the cogitations of him with such nonsense, which served only to vilify him with contradictions, instead of glorifying him as God. Bind the sacrifice with cords; but let it be offered only to the God of heaven, without mixing any idolatrous manner, or idol-mediator with it, as Job, that ancient Arabian, was free from; and, as their history relates, was practised in China for many ages, before idolatry entered. And it is probable from Plutarch, that Upper Egypt was, for a long time, free from the vile idolatry they were afterwards so infamous for; they professed to worship nothing but their God Cneph, whom they affirmed to be without beginning and without end; and though they represented this Deity by a figure of a serpent, with the head of a hawk, in the middle of a circle, yet they affirmed this God was the creator of all things, incorruptible and eternal.

"So far," says Sir Isaac Newton, "as we can know by natural philosophy, what is the first

first cause, what power he has over us, and what benefits we receive from him, so far our duty towards him, as well as that towards one another, will appear to us by the light of nature. And, no doubt, if the worship of false gods had not blinded the heathens, their moral philosophy would have gone farther than to the four cardinal virtues; and instead of teaching the transmigration of souls, and to worship the sun and moon, and dead heroes, they would have taught us to worship our true Author and Benefactor, as their ancestors did under the government of Noah and his sons, before they corrupted themselves." But after the corruption entered, then began the blindness and insufficiency of reason in their best philosophers; they were carried away with the stream, and by a voluntary kind of overbearance sided with it. Though they might know it was an absurdity and injustice to God the Creator, to worship the creature more than the Creator (as the vulgar did and will do every-where), or besides, or in conjunction with him, as the philosophers, with the popish writers, might think of screening themselves with the vain distinction of relative worship, wherein neither Gentile, Jew, or false Christian, ever could or ever can find the benefit of an excuse; seeing relative swearing (a kind of worship) by the temple, &c. is condemned as indefensible.

It is very remarkable that the very learned Huetius, among others, cites the Chinese; and shews that the old Romans, for the first 170 years, were without images in their worship, in order to prove it the universal practice of the first ages after the flood to worship God without them; which brings an argument home to their own door, that he did not think of, viz. that in case the scripture had not condemned the idolatrous manner of worshipping by images, the uncorrupt state of nature furnishes an argument against it.

Dr. Clarke's observation upon Isa. xi. 4, &c. and Rev. xiv. 6. xi. 5, is worthy of notice: "I saw an angel having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred, and tongue and people." And "there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." Whether these and the like prophecies shall yet finally have a literal accomplishment, by an universal prevalency of the Gospel of peace on earth; or whether they shall have their full and literal completion only in that new heaven and new earth wherein righteousness is to dwell for ever; is still a secret in the breast of Providence, which we ought not to be over-confident in explaining. I need not repeat what was observed before of the fulness and fitness of the time of his manifestation; but proceed to shew the falsehood of our author's assertion, that the Gospel was published but to a small part of mankind. For, is it not well known, that in the space of 300 years it spread all over the Roman empire; and beyond its limits, as far eastward as Malabar, by the preaching of St. Thomas? That empire was then so general, as to be called the world, *οικουμένη*. It was, without doubt, the most civilized part of the terraqueous globe, the most susceptible and fittest to receive the Gospel.

The Chinese, who reckon themselves the wisest people in the world, as if they had received the ten pounds, and all the rest of the world but one pound of that talent, reason, despising others as fools to them, put their reason to no other use, in religious matters (the principal object of human understanding), but to strive to outdo one another in multiplying new idols of worship*; and sometimes disgracing old ones upon an unsuccessful suit to them. They are ingenious at civil arts and laws; but blind and infatuated in burying religion under heaps of rubbish and loads of superstition. So degenerate is the wisdom of this world when unassisted by revelation of the wisdom from above! The candle of the Lord (their reason), which should light them to the Lord of heaven and earth, they have put under a bushel, and keep it there, without desiring the Gospel for a candlestick. The Jesuits may probably have made some sincere converts to mathematics, but few, it is feared, to christianity; to be sure, not one to the true religion of Jesus. And in Japan, the missionaries managed so badly, by carrying the spirit of the world with them (as that sort

* Most learned, and most idolatrous and superstitious, are very compatible in a Heathen country, witness Athens and Egypt. And now in China there is as great a mob of gods to be seen.

generally did) to propagate a religion not of this world; that they gave occasion to the shutting the door against it and its very name, and brought on a perpetual banishment, by the severest laws the wit of man can invent. They may, it is true, find the less difficulty in making converts in some idolatrous nations, because there is so great affinity between the idolatry and superstition of the converter and the converted; but how great will be the difficulty of those who come after, who may be willing to undeceive them, by shewing what true christianity is?

Other Heathens are so far sunk and lost in the slothful disuse of their one talent, that they seem to require a long preparation, from fore-running traffick and commerce, to humanize and rationalize them, before the pearl of christianity, the greatest jewel of divine or human reason, can be received into their esteem. Gentle alterations and commixtures of other nations may talk and reason them into some impressions of it, in process of time: but it is not for us to know the particular times and seasons when the fulness of the Gentiles will come in, since God has reserved them in his own hands.

1. The Deist makes sacrifices the invention of the priests in Egypt, yet owns the first sacrifices were offered, as they certainly were, by fathers and heads of families, who had the chief care of the prosperity of those under them. We may observe, by the way, a very good reason from the origin of things, why sovereigns succeeding to the paternal government should copy that pattern, be the head of the church, and have the supreme care and controul in religion. And if the acceptableness of the sacrifice consists, as we are told, in the dearness and value of it to the owner or offerer, how came heads of families to be willing to part with their best things in order to recommend themselves to heaven, if there was not a previous signification and command from thence for sacrifice of some kind, and then the choice of the best of that kind followed of itself? It is very improbable, nay morally impossible, that sacrifice should be an human institution. But if the acceptableness is to be derived from a submission to divine authority, as an acknowledgment of the right of commanding, and the duty of obeying, this makes it of divine institution, and brings revelation along with it; for how can a divine command be known without revelation? Or if the atoning, reconciling virtue must arise, as some suggest, partly from the command of God, partly from the value and dearness of the thing to the owner, what can more enhance the excellency of the sacrifice of Christ?

2. He sufficiently accuses the priests and clergy of understanding their own interest; whilst he deposes against them, "that they made themselves the only authorized mediators between the people and God;" but is it not strange how it should ever come into their heads to part with that beneficial office; or to forge a revelation that takes it out of their hands, and sets up Christ alone in that office and dignity? Or how came the protestant part of them to resign an opulent flourishing dominion over conscience for the sake of truth, and comparative poverty, and, by an uncontrouled licence of the age, of being vilified and run down in the open market-place, in print, notwithstanding. Are these accusations or encomiums?

3. He says, without one word of proof, the Jews revolted so much to idolatry because of the expence of the public worship, and the great gains the clergy got by it: but the record insinuates quite another reason, and that was, the gratification of their lascivious appetites, which they religiously pampered in the idolatrous worship of their neighbours.

4. Though the law of Moses admitted no pardon of sin, as pertaining to conscience in their sacrifices, but only of sins and transgressions of the law of their constitution; is it not a polite demand, and a pleasant kind of challenge to any of the clergy (if any would be so ill at leisure as to humour the Deist in such a whimsical proposal) to prove and make out from the Jewish accounts of sacrifice, that the life of the sacrifice was vicarious for the offender; whether they were in possession of such an opinion in virtue of those statutes and ordinances, or whether it did not derive from more ancient time; when he has over and over declared the Jewish sacrifices to be all cheat, learnt in, and brought with them out of Egypt; to what purpose is it to appeal to an arrant imposture for finding out truth? He can never be concluded by evidence he has already cashiered, and excepted against:

against: besides, he has another evasion ready, if he should be pinched at any time, with respect to any institution, or positive of revelation, viz. that the thing is interpolated; for he in effect affirms, whatever is not moral therein is interpolated.

5. He represents christianity as a political faction among the Jews; that Christ as the Saviour of the world, was the Gospel of St. Paul only, and not the Gospel of Peter, James, and John, who confined salvation to the Jews only, or proselytes to them: yet St. John declares openly in the face of this author, whoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life, ch. iii. 15. and that he is the propitiation not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world, 1 John ii. 2. and St. Peter pronounces God to be no respecter of persons, but, in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him, Acts x. 34. That there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, Acts iv. 12. Which salvation and eternal life the Deist, with amazing assurance and uncharitableness, confines to the Jews only, as if the Messiah was Jesus and Christ, Saviour and Deliverer to them exclusively, and in no other sense but as Restorer of the kingdom of Israel, and to the house of David.

The Deist also maintains, that the chief ground for rejecting the peculiar, nay, the most important doctrines of revelation, is the variety and contrariety of sentiments about them; that consequently none of the doctrines of revelation [as distinguished from Deism] can be fundamental or necessary. Again, he affirms, that to this day there are not any two sects or parties, who can agree about any one system or scheme of what they call positive instituted religion; and challenges all or any of them to name any one single point of inspiration, or mere revelation, in which they are agreed, or which they do not differently understand and interpret as much as any two different and contrary doctrines in the world. But if this is a good argument, it proves too much, and consequently nothing at all, at least peculiarly against the positive parts of christianity. If Christians are to be condemned merely upon this account, the like diversity of opinion will rise up in judgment against his own dear religion, the religion of nature. Have there not actually been as many (perhaps more, two hundred and eighty are reckoned up) divisions and subdivisions of opinion concerning the *summum bonum* among philosophers, as there are divisions among Christians? Is there therefore no truth, nothing fundamental or necessary, either in the end or the means? They both administer to different opinions (though not equally different), and both are occasioned one and the same way; by either adding to, or leaving out more or less ideas than really belong to it; or perhaps for want of that easy observation of the religion of the end, and the religion of the means, which heals the breaches, recovers misunderstandings, and makes a perfect reconciliation. Is the fault in the revelation, or the readers; in their judgment, or their passions; their capacity for sound knowledge, or their pre-conceived notions and warping prejudices?

As to the Deist's challenge of naming any one single point of inspiration, or mere revelation, wherein they are agreed;—I fancy I can name him two. One is the prophecy, That there shall be "false teachers, who shall privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them:" they are sufficiently agreed in the truth of that, by unhappy experience. Another thing of mere revelation they are united and agreed in is, that Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man, is Son of God, and Son of man. Had Christians been so prudent as to have rested in that inspired definition, what rivers of ink and blood might have been saved for better uses!

C H A P. III.

OF THE PRIESTLY OFFICE OF CHRIST; WHICH IS A SUBJECT DEISTICAL MEN CANNOT ENDURE.

CHRIST was to suffer death, as a martyr to the truth of God's reconcileable disposition to sinners; that disposition was evident enough in his appointing such a person, and sending him into the world; but as the Mediator of the new covenant, who, by suffering

fering in our stead the punishment due to our sin, undertook to accomplish thereby an actual, full, perfect reconciliation between God and man. Thus it is represented: "For this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance: for where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth," Heb. ix. 15, 16, 17. The same word which is translated testament, in other places signifies covenant; which, according to Whitby, "as it was sealed with, and confirmed by his blood, procuring for us such blessings as he by his will designed for, and declared should be conferred upon believers through faith in his blood, became also a testament." But the word should everywhere be rendered covenant, not testament; and there is no necessity for translating it testament even in this place, in case testator implies pacifier.

It became him to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through suffering, or tasting death for every man, Heb. ii. 9, 10. It does not say, there was no other way possible for the salvation of sinners. But what is more to the purpose, if that method best BECAME the grace, wisdom, and power of God, we may be very sure it was in itself the best, the wisest, and the most honourable that could be pitched upon; for nothing but what is most divine and beneficial in goodness, most sublime and adorable in wisdom, most influential and awful in legislature and government, could become God to propose, or the Mediator to undertake, or man to receive the benefit of, in that most important concern.

"It is enough (in the opinion of the impartial Mr. Locke) to justify the fitness of any thing to be done, by resolving it into the wisdom of God, who has done it; whereof our narrow understandings, and short views, may utterly incapacitate us to judge. We know little of this visible, and nothing at all of the state of that intellectual world; wherein are infinite numbers and degrees of spirits out of the reach of our ken or guess; and therefore know not what transactions there were between God and our Saviour, in reference to his kingdom. We know not what need there was to set up a head and a chieftain, in opposition to the "Prince of this world, the prince of the power of the air," &c. And we shall take too much upon us, if we shall call God's wisdom or providence to account, and pertly condemn for needless all that our weak, and, perhaps, biased understandings, cannot account for. Yet, in this particular case, the wisdom and goodness of God has shewn itself so visibly to common apprehensions, that it hath furnished us abundantly wherewithal to satisfy the curious and inquisitive; who will not take a blessing, unless they be instructed what need they have of it, and why it was bestowed upon them."

The making the Captain of our salvation perfect through suffering death, was that which made him a perfect Mediator in office, as he was before perfectly qualified in his person and nature to go through with it. And thus as the law of God obliging to obedience was wisely laid in the nature and reason of things, so the divine method of pardoning transgression and recovering to obedience, through this Mediator, is likewise founded in the nature and fitness of things; not discoverable indeed to our reason, without the help of revelation: but when that opened the treasures of wisdom and mercy in saving sinners; it, at the same time, shews how perfectly well the Mediator consults the nature of God, and the present nature of man, in erecting the best kingdom and government that can possibly subsist between them.

As the foundation of faith in the Mediator is laid in the revealed union of the divine and human nature, Son of God, and Son of man, personally dying for the sins of the world, rising from the dead, and interceding in heaven for us; the reasons of his death, and the saving efficacy of his blood-shedding, are expressed by his dying for us, bearing our sins, or the punishment of them. By being an offering, propitiation, sacrifice, for our sins, and we receiving the atonement; his blood shed for putting away, taking away, cleansing, washing, purifying, purging, remitting of sins; and, with respect to the value of his precious blood, and our captivity under sin and Satan, by purchasing, ransoming, and redeeming us.

It was necessary to take human nature upon him, that he might "taste death for every man"

man" in the same nature that sinned. Such a body was therefore prepared for him, "that he who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified may be one" in nature: and "as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, so was he: that he might destroy him who had the power of death, i. e. the devil!" And so vanquishing him in the same nature that he had before vanquished, might regain the life of the body and soul to eternal life.

The devil was a murderer from the beginning, and the captain of that sin which brought death into the world. For reducing of him, and all his host of devices, and to make an antidote of that death which the other designed for eternal poison, our Jesus became Captain of life and salvation, and beat and confounded him at his own play. He thought, by introducing death, he had sweetly glutted his own malice in the irreparable destruction of the human race; but by the very means of death our Mediator destroyed his design; and raised life, life eternal, of greater advantage, and higher degree, out of it, for the good of man, and the glory of God's mercy, righteousness, and wisdom. For it was the glory of God to conquer the devil as well as man, in every step of that dispensation, by wisdom and righteousness, more than with power, which nothing can resist. He led captivity captive, by triumphing over death, and conquered the chief leader of all pride, by the humiliation of himself to man: whilst the goodness and mercy of God to man, in leading him to repentance by that method, was all the conquest he aimed at over man, for relinquishing the usurped dominion of sin and the devil.

It was not possible, nor fit, i. e. not morally possible in the nature of things, that the blood of bulls or goats, nor yet of angels (had they any) should take away the sins of man; because neither of them had a nature conscious of his sin, nor capable of being guilty of it, and therefore incapable of suffering the pains of death for it, or of vindicating the justice of God in inflicting that punishment upon the transgressing nature of man; or of being an example and warning to him against the presumption of breaking the divine laws. Were God an arbitrary being, it was very possible for the blood of bulls, &c. to take away sins; but as he conducts himself by the true constitution and reason of things, it was impossible it should. Nor could any other nature furnish the high priest of our profession with the proper feeling of our infirmities, and intended sympathy with our sufferings, to enable him to become a compassionate high priest for us. Nor was it necessary for him to be undefiled, harmless, separate from sinners, in order to die as a martyr; for what martyr was ever free from the guilt of some personal sins? But to die as a mediator, or suffer as a substitute in the sinner's stead, he must of necessity have no sins of his own to atone for, because that would effectually bar the sufficiency of his atonement for the sins of others, at the same time. And because perfectly innocent and free from all sin of his own; no power, no, not of his Father, could, with any justice, take away his life.

But Christ having a previous inherent right and power over his own life, to lay it down, and take it again, he voluntarily made a free-will offering of it; at the same time God the Father was at liberty to accept or refuse the oblation, how generous soever it was. The vindictive justice of the law insisted upon the punishment of the sinner in *propria persona*: but then, as the end of his law and government was the obedience of his subjects, and the probation-end of punishment was the securing that obedience, and the securing that was the establishing the law and government in its full strength, and asserting the honour and dignity of the legislator to the highest regard of submission; if the punishment might be transferred upon one willing to undergo it, so as no injustice be done to a third person, in the thoughts of mercy to redeem the sinner from death; and if the person so ready to sustain it, and stand between us and destruction, is also of that super-eminent dignity, as that his suffering would prove an effectual terror to all reasonable men, against repeating their transgressions any more, and so recovering their bounden duty and obedience to the law; what should hinder God, who in the midst of judgment thinketh upon mercy, from accepting a method of pardoning and saving sinners, so glorious to his innate mercy, and to his essential love? And as he was pleased to accept it, when he was in no respect of law or justice obliged to do so, that rendered his forgiving sin, in that manner, an act of mercy, grace, free and rich grace. And to that very grace of God is the permission and acceptance of the death of the Mediator imputed, Heb. xi. 9. that "He, by the grace of God, might

might taste death for every man." So John iii. 16. 1 John iv. 9. For the original promise in paradise was of grace, and therefore every thing that followed after in that whole dispensation must be of grace likewise, exclusive of debt in the sense of merit on man's part, in every article.

Whatever the sacrifice is, how valuable or costly soever, still it is the acceptance of God, the offended party, that must admit of that exchange, or allow it to be vicarious, or receive it in exemption of, and in propitiation for the guilty sinner; that he may enjoy the saving benefit and efficacy thereof, by being personally released from having his trespasses and its wages imputed to him, or having his sins and iniquities remembered any more. The suffering of the innocent, though in the same nature, can no otherwise become an expiation for the soul that sinneth; because the suffering of another not being the suffering of the person that sinned; the obligation of the law, which exacts and marks out the punishment of the sinner in person, had been disregarded; unless the legislator, who had the power of dispensing with his own laws, so as best to procure obedience, and secure the ends of their institution, had been pleased to wave his own right, and relax his own law, and, by the interposal of his grace and mercy, admit the suffering, and accept of the punishment of one, in lieu of the other; of the more worthy, willing Mediator Christ Jesus, instead of criminal, guilty man; "the just for the unjust."

So that though the pardon of man's sins is issued through Christ, and granted for the sake and consideration of his sufferings, it is nevertheless, with respect to man, a free, gratuitous pardon, and a special, undeserved, unobligated act of grace; and the sinner is as much obliged to mercy, as if there was no Christ: but by taking that method, and sending his Son, his love and his mercy are so much the more enhanced to man. It appears, by right reason, in the book of Job, that though God is in himself of a placable and propitious disposition, yet, when he is displeased, he insists upon one to intervene between himself and the offender, with sacrifice, whom he thinks proper to accept, before he will become actually reconciled with the offender. "My anger (said he to Eliphaz) is kindled against thee, and thy two friends; because ye have not spoken of me the things that are right, as my servant Job: therefore take unto you now seven bullocks, and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept," (his face or person, as in the margin); "lest I deal with you after your folly"; ch. xlii. 7, 8. He was so appeaseable and good as to appoint the means to his favour, but would not however be actually appeased, till the sacrifice was first offered by him, whom he appointed; and because appointed, therefore only to be accepted. They might have thought, from the apprehensions they had of his natural goodness, that repentance had been sufficient to pacify him; but we see how vain are such thoughts, and how contrary to God's thoughts.

When a person presents himself, who has a real property in his own life, and whose offer is so valuable before him who is supreme over the law; it is as much his right to dispense with his own laws, as it was at first to make them; he is accountable to none; nor has he any rule to go by in guiding his proceedings with men, but what shall most engage their love and esteem, their fear and awe of his authority over them; and best promote their real good and happiness, which is his own glory. If any expedient therefore offers from a third person that effectually answers these ends, his mercy and goodness would never hesitate to close with it, as the best course that could be taken with frail, peccant man, for the better observance of his laws for the future.

A deistical author, in his *Characteristics*, therefore quite mistakes the character wherein God judges and determines; "Whoever thinks there is a God, and pretends formally to believe that he is just and good, must suppose that there is independently such a thing as justice and injustice, truth and falsehood, right and wrong; according to which he pronounces God is just, righteous, and true. If the mere will, decree, or law of God, is said absolutely to constitute right and wrong, then are these latter words of no signification at all. For thus if each part of a contradiction was affirmed for truth by the Supreme Power, that would consequently become true. Thus if one person was decreed to suffer for another's fault, the sentence would be just and equitable."

The

The following may serve as an answer to this reflection upon christianity. We are not to estimate the goodness or justice of God by the measures of the goodness and justice of a subordinate judge in his proceedings; for then neither Christ could have suffered though he had offered himself, nor could the offender any way escape the punishment of the law; but he is to be considered as a Legislator, who does not vary, but is still constant and true to the design of punishment, and the end of his law, which is, to have it observed. If it can be done one way, and not another, upon a change of circumstances, and a person offers himself freely to punishment whose suffering answers the design of punishment; in that case, the sentence will be both righteous and true, because true to the righteous intention of the law; though it is not properly a sentence on the part of God, but a permission in him, that the third person should suffer according to his own offer. And if the intention of punishment, and of the law, can be better observed and fulfilled one way than another, then the sentence is not only righteous and true, but wise and merciful, moreover; so that there is no notion of right or wrong inverted, as if an inferior judge had acted. And God himself estimates, and measures out to us his own justice, by this dispensation: "That he might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," Rom. iii. 26.

The DIGNITY of the person suffering such things for us, is a very awful and affecting consideration, and concerns us to improve it, as a prime fundamental of holy religion. Thus the scriptures would raise and exalt our religious contemplations of his sufferings, by the sublime value of the Divine Nature personally united to the human. "The Lord of glory is said to be crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 8. and He who was in the form of God, humbled himself and became obedient unto the death of the cross," Phil. iii. 6, 8. and "the church to be purchased with the blood of God," Acts xx. 28. Though he suffered what he did in his human nature, yet that being personally united to the Divine, and He being God as well as man, the value is rated, and the denomination taken, from the principal nature in the union.

Thus of the two different natures, soul and body of man, what is properly done by one, is familiarly ascribed to the other, as touching, eating, Lev. v. 2. vii. 18, &c. to the soul, so *vice versa*. "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come," Ps. lxxv. 2, &c. Or if a plebeian is adopted to be an emperor, any suffering or indignity done to him afterwards is enhanced from his imperial elevation. The people estimated the life of David worth more than ten thousand of themselves, 2 Sam. xviii. 3. Thus "the civil law determines, that a tree transplanted from one soil to another, and taking root there, belongs to the owner of that ground; in regard that, receiving nourishment from a new earth, it becomes as it were another tree, though there be the same individual root, the same body, and the same soul of vegetation as before. Thus the human nature, taken from the common mass of mankind, and transplanted by personal union into the Divine, is to be reckoned as intirely belonging to the Divine, and the actions proceeding from it are not merely human, but are raised above their natural worth, and become meritorious."

It is very unsafe, and unbecoming the obligations of Christians, to depress the dignity of the Mediator, or subtract from his divine nature, as Son of God; because the depressing of that depresses, 1. The perfection of the Mediator, which was shewn before to consist in the personal union of the divine and human nature. 2. The certainty of our reconciliation. 3. The wisdom of God in accepting such a person to suffering, if a less would have sufficed. 4. The love of God and Christ towards us, and our reciprocal bounden love towards them. 5. The humility of our Lord in his condescension. 6. The heinousness and demerit of sin. 7. God's hatred against it. 8. Our fear of his displeasure in committing it. 9. The vindication of his authority, honour, and dignity, and the firmer establishment of the divine law and government. 10. The Mediator's intercession for us. 11. His capacity of being king, lord, judge over us. 12. Our honour and worship of him. This persuasion gives a confidence more than human to our faith, and a *παρρησια* steadfast and immoveable to the reason of the hope that is in us, when interrogated for an answer concerning it; and that well-becoming assurance may be added which the apostle uses in the hope of future glory.

The profound wisdom of God, in thus dispensing salvation to the world through the death of his Son, so much superior to, and unscrutable by the wisdom of man before it was revealed, is most illustrious, adorable, and convincing to his reason, now it is revealed to his benefit. The treasures of this wisdom were unsearchable to the angels, who, since its revelation to the churches, go to school upon earth, to look into it, and adore: and what they cannot learn there, they, though not directly interested in it, make up in heaven, in songs and hallelujahs, "Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain, to receive blessings, honour," &c. Man is not only saved by it, but all points of the divine honour and justice, law and government, are saved by it too; and not only saved, but advanced and ingratiated into all the powers and obligations of man's obedience, much deeper and surer than if God had, or would pardon all sin without the consideration of the Mediator's suffering the punishment, in expiation for the sinner.

There cannot possibly be a greater demonstration given to the world of God's hatred and indignation against sin, or the greatness of its guilt; since it is as legible in the punishment of his Son, or rather more so than if the offender himself had suffered. That, rather than presumptuous iniquity should go unpunished, he hated it more than he loved the only begotten Son of his own bosom. Nay, not only suffered him to be exposed to the pains and ignominy of a temporal death, but, what seems more dreadful and less supportable, to taste, for a short time, some of the horrors and vengeance of eternal death due unto sinners; in the dereliction of him in his agony in the garden, when all the infernal powers of darkness seem to have been let loose upon his righteous spirit, and he left to bear the whole weight of God's displeasure; the feeling of which, besides tears and strong cries, produced a preternatural sweat of great drops of blood. That, and that only, seems to be the hour in which he prayed the Father to save him from; not the hour of death, for he was fortified and prepared for that.

If therefore the vengeance of one hour of the powers of darkness was so insupportable to him, as to require an angel from heaven to comfort him; how can the sinner think of being able to bear to all eternity the inexpressible horrors and torments of the damned? or, thinking thereon, forbear to fear and tremble into an immediate repentance? It must be the greatest madness, and loss of reason, to imagine that God will ever spare him in his avowed enmity, when he spared not his own Son, who had never offended against him.

Hence appears the weakness and impertinence of that opinion, that one drop of our Saviour's blood was of value sufficient to save the whole world. If one drop would have sufficed, what occasion for the effusion of the rest? But here lies the mistake; the redemption depended not upon some sufferings, or the injurious loss of some blood, but upon the death of the Mediator, and the blood of the new covenant is an equivalent expression to that: it being consonant to reason that the expiation of punishment should be agreeable to the punishment: if the wages of sin is death, i. e. separation of soul and body, no less can suffice in the Mediator in order to a proper and full expiation for the guilty sinner.

But now, if God, passing by this wise method of saving sinners, had executed the punishment upon offenders in their utter destruction, how could he have displayed, before men, the aversion of his holiness, and the perfect abhorrence he bears, to sin? It could not have appeared to men to do them any good, for that was too late; it might have appeared to angels, but that was to no purpose, it could be no example to them: they side so much already with God in the hatred of sin, and its ruinous consequences, that the conversion of a sinner is a festival to them.

If, then, the execution of personal punishment must have been the destruction of the human race; and if a pardon proclaimed from the natural goodness of God, without any vindication on his part, would amount to an act of indemnity, or general indulgence, for breaking his laws, or an universal jubilee for joy, that men might do so; there is no medium but in a Mediator. And that makes all things meet: it makes peace in heaven, by reconciling all the divine attributes: brings peace to the conscience on earth. It gives God an honourable opportunity of displaying his mercy and goodness unto men; well becoming himself, and consistent with what he is, a Governor over us; more this way than

than could be done any other way: any other way, we must either cease to be, or he must cease to be our Governor, as he is; because the safety of his honour was to be consulted, as well as the safety and salvation of men.

This hatred (not unexpiable) of sin is as consistent with his love of the sinner, as in a gracious parent is blended the sure love of his child with the perfect hatred of his ruinous courses. And every wilful sinner, before he is hardened, has this testimony within himself of the divine dislike of his ways, because they are against the approbation of his own mind, much more against God's; the frame and design of his own nature remonstrate against them, much more the Author and Father of his nature.

The less displeasure men apprehend in God against their deviations from his laws, the more their corrupt inclination unavoidably increases the reception of them; and the easier and cheaper the terms are whereon they fancy he will be reconciled, the less necessity is there for parting with their darling irregularities; the more encouragement they will certainly take to continue in them with greediness, and without any disquieting concern about the displeasure of so good-natured a Being. This is a polite genteel sort of religion after their own heart, offering little interruption to vice, or disturbance to lusts, which they persuade themselves not to be displeasing to God for that reason, because he receives no injury from them; such a scheme they think worthy to come from him; and, in a wrong meaning, can, with the deist, quote Job and Esdras; for that, "If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? Or if thy transgressions are multiplied, what doest thou unto him? What is man that thou shouldst take displeasure at him? Or what is a corruptible generation, that thou shouldst be so bitter towards it?"

But their brother deists, the ancient and modern Heathens, from the light of nature, had quite different notions of the Deity; being in their religious applications universally impressed with a sense of his displeasure against sin, and a fear of his justice in punishing for it, though it wrought no repentance; and of their own unworthiness to approach, and incapacity to atone him without sacrifices, and mediators many. They wandered accordingly with great anxiety of mind in shadows and darkness, wishing for instruction and revelation from Heaven. Whilst the Christian deists (if I may call them so who live in a Christian country) enjoy the light and the substance of one true Mediator, and his only sacrifice for sin; but come not to the light, because their deeds are evil; they love those deeds, and therefore they hate a religion which gives such evident marks and demonstrations of God's hatred of sin.

The blessed intention of divine revelation is, to guide us to the perfection of our nature, and to the fruition of all blessedness, by arguments drawn (and such a draught, were all men of a considering ingenuous disposition, would be sufficient to persuade) from considerations of the superlative grace, and prodigious love of God and Christ, in the work of our redemption; "The exceeding riches of his grace made known in his kindness towards us through Jesus Christ," Eph. ii. 7. Such "Goodness of God was intended to lead us to repentance," Rom. ii. 4. St. Peter, referring to this place, says, "Account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you," 2 Eph. iii. 15. What one calls repentance, the other styles salvation; because the former is the indispensable way to the latter: and the greatest argument in the world, to begin and finish it, is that thankful reasoning upon God's most tender and affectionate goodness, manifested in the method of salvation. The engaging power, the mighty sweetness, and obliging strength, of that gracious argument, is, in a manner, irresistible upon all who will bestow the least attention upon it; and it is the most inhuman dissingenuousness to abuse an argument drawn from such goodness, or kind convictions of it.

In giving his Son to die for us, "how shall he not with him freely give us all things!" In giving the fountain and foundation of his mercies, the streams follow of course. God has laid such infinite obligations upon us, that we must be false to all that is grateful, just, or rational in human nature, as many as think of no returns. Who can disallow the equity, or not dread the apostolical condemnation; "if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ,

Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha," 1 Cor. xvi. 22. he is cursed among men, he is abandoned from the principles of human nature.

And very justly does our Lord declare, "he that loveth father or mother, son or daughter, more than him, is not worthy of him," Matt. x. 37. for had they all been willing to be sacrificed for the sin of the soul, it would have signified just nothing. "Greater love than this hath no man, to lay down his life for his friend; but herein, above all men, hath Christ magnified his love; in that, while we were yet enemies, he died for us." From being slaves to sin and Satan, he ransomed and adopted us to the freedom of being sons of God, and joint heirs with himself of the purchased inheritance: he made himself low and poor, a curse and a reproach, that he might exalt us to heavenly treasure, and bless us with glory. He gets us pardon for our sin, and, in the way he got it, wins more upon the sinner, and gains his heart, than to be forgiven, as often as we offended, upon mere saying we repented. All the invitations to returning sinners, in the New Testament, are grounded upon this belief of Christ for the remission of sins; and, in the Old Testament, upon the hopes in him.

If the mercy of God always consults and advises with his wisdom and justice, to imagine (as some do) that Christ, in offering up his sacrifice to God, addressed it only to his mercy, by way of prayer and supplication to forgive the sins of men, and not to the vindication of his honour and justice, is to make a distinction without a reason. For then his prayer and supplication for the pardon of the sins of the world might have sufficed, without the sacrifice of himself. But we find that strong cries and tears, and the most vehement supplication could not avail for himself, much less for the world. Besides, the time of praying the Father in behalf of the sins of men was to succeed after that, and be offered up in virtue of the sacrifice he had made. Justice for promoting obedience by coercing disobedience, is *suo-jure*, as necessary to the idea of a governor, as punishment is to laws, and laws to government; or the idea of being governed by God, is to mankind. Therefore goodness armed with justice, like a load-stone armed with iron, vastly increases its attracting power.

This is such a captivating argument for the love of God, as natural religion is a stranger to; and consequently a stranger to the highest reason, the noblest, the freest, and most obedient principle of religion. For so much as is denied to, or diminished from, the goodness of God in this dispensation, so much is denied of, or taken from, the reason and ground of loving God: for which reason there is so little mention of the love of God among the heathen moralists. Some of them (the Platonists) had a notion of the absolute goodness of God, as the chief good, the original beauty and harmony: but as to his relative goodness, and the practical influences of that, though the Deity was continually pouring his natural benefits upon men, they were in a manner silent, and the heathen world unthankful.

They basely robbed him of that endearing obligation of duty, and, by doing so, endeavoured to put out his name from under heaven; by disregarding that beneficence whereby he would make himself known unto men, and tie them down to a natural obedience to him. And is not the superabounding mercy and goodness of God, in the redemption of the world, more attracting of love, more influential of gratitude, and more persuasive of obedience, than the Deist's participation of common goodness over all creatures, without distinction of the good from the bad, or those who were better than the worst, among men? Were they true to their endeavours of adhering, in practice, to the law of nature, they would gladly embrace the best means, and the most cogent principle, for putting christianity in practice; but, as they contemptuously slight this, it gives a well-grounded jealousy that they really, and at the bottom, slight and disregard that religion of nature which they pretend to reverence and extol.

Is it not best for the world, is it not happy for them in particular, to receive such a religion as removes that natural anxiety and enmity of mind which arises out of a sense of guilt, by a propitiation of God's own providing, without any cost to them? Or are they angry, because he makes the first overture for peace and reconciliation, in the method of the Christian salvation?

If an unknown friend should leave them a vast estate, at his death, upon condition of changing their name, and preserving a solemn remembrance of him, and undertaking to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; would they reject the offer, or think themselves unworthy of it, purely because the conditions are so easy and so entirely reasonable? Or, should any of them be enslaved by wild barbarians, and a person generously offers to ransom them, would they refuse, merely because they did not send for him? Or if, by rebellious practices, they had fallen under the heavy displeasure of their prince, would they be disgusted at him because he proposed to accept of his own son, who offered himself a mediator with his father for them, to procure their peace, and introduce them again to his presence, and to wonted favour?

What seems to mislead them most, as well as others, who deny the divine nature, and its union with the human, in our Mediator, is the opinion that it is mean and degrading for the Son of God to become man. The like sentiment was the occasion of the Heathens substituting false mediators, and intrusting dæmons with that office, whom they fancied to be of a middle state and circumstance, inferior to the gods, and superior to man, but partaking of neither of their natures. But it is a sign these persons have little studied God, his goodness, his power, or his greatness, else they would never entertain such a stingy, incredulous opinion of meanness in such a condescension in the Son of God. If they account it honourable and glorious, in one like themselves, to stoop to relieve the misery of a fellow-creature, and put themselves to some inconvenience in doing it, or postpone their own advantage and convenience for the good of the public, and call the action heroic, godlike; why not allow God, infinitely more inclined to such acts, to send his Son; and his Son to condescend to take our nature upon him to save a world of perishing sinners: when the Father, who best understands what is true greatness and glory, places both of them in being good; and as a proof of that, in condescending acts of doing good; and the Son places his glory in that opportunity of going about upon our earth, doing good, and ministering, rather than being ministered unto.

C H A P. IV.

SOME REMARKS ON CHRIST'S EXALTATION AND INTERCESSION.

CHRIST's human nature was the proper subject of his exaltation; in his humiliation, it was clothed with mortality, and the form of a servant as an outward vesture: at his exaltation, he put off that vesture, and clothed the human nature with his immortality, and covered and adorned its immortality with robes of glory and majesty. Before I treat of the ends and benefits of his ascension, it may be proper to consider some circumstances of it.

Our Lord is represented to have ascended above all heavens, higher than the heavens; to be taken into glory, into the most excellent glory, and to the right hand of God, and there to sit: undoubtedly signifying, that he is exalted to that very inaccessible light where God dwelleth, that all-blessed and all-glorious place, where there are many blissful mansions; the highest residence, the chiefest station whereof is justly given to him, "whom in all things it becometh to have the pre-eminence," Col. i. 18. for his mighty suffering upon earth for man's salvation: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing," Rev. v. 12. This dignification of him above every name, and inauguration into a kingdom and governance over all, is familiarly represented to our earthy conceptions by "sitting at the right hand of God."

For as the right hand of this world's monarchs is the chiefest place of honour and distinction: after the like manner is the glorified Jesus at God's right hand, at the right hand of his power, and of his throne, and in many places said to sit there; which seems

to imply the firm possession and durable continuance of that glorious state, or the honourable posture of a judge, which is that of sitting: for he is constituted our Ruler and Judge, and there he sits in the throne of his Majesty. One place there is (Acts vii. 56.) where St. Stephen is said to have "seen the glory of God, and Jesus standing at his right hand;" which change of posture seems to denote the ready assistance of his distressed servants; as if he had risen off his seat, to plead for them with his Father.

The first blessed end of his ascending into heaven was, that he might send the Holy Ghost the comforter. So he opened the matter to his disciples, and blamed their rising sorrow at the news of his departure, with an assurance that "it is expedient for you that I go away," in order to send him; and "if I go not away, the Comforter will not come," John xvi. 7. And elsewhere (vii. 32) "the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified;" i. e. the Holy Spirit was not yet imparted, and become the explicit right of men, in virtue of the divine promise and engagement in the Gospel covenant, till all things belonging to the Mediator of that covenant were fully completed. It is true, the communications of the Spirit of grace and comfort were gratuitously imparted to several before, and under the dispensation of Moses; and seem to have been given to some under that law. But it did not properly belong to that œconomy; there was no claim of right, nor any expectation of fulfilling the promise, but in virtue of the future ensuing dispensation of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who brought grace and truth. Then the Spirit of God explicitly became the great and glorious condition of the New Covenant. And God bound himself in the justice of promise, and the obligation of covenant, to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him in the Mediator's name. The prayers and supplications of such votaries will ever have a right to the special influences and comforts of that Holy Spirit, and to the increase thereof, according to their actual improvements under what is given. But the first extraordinary effusion of that celestial spring of gifts unto men, was to be the effect and consequence of our Mediator's prayers and intercession to the Father for it: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter," John xiv. 16.

And that first instance of his prevailing intercession (a surprising token of its efficacy) commenced, when he was received up into glory, and entered within the veil; and had presented the blood of atonement, for making up the breaches, and cementing the friendship between God and man. In return of which, as a demonstrative attestation of a perfect reconciliation and peace effected and concluded, kings, upon their solemn taking possession of their dignity, are wont to bestow gifts and largesses; the most extraordinary of the Holy Ghost were poured out upon the then disciples; and the love of God shed abroad upon the hearts of all believers, by the same Spirit which is given unto us; whose blessed comforts were designed a lasting joy, that joy in the Holy Ghost, which, together with peace and righteousness, is constitutive of the kingdom of God, Rom. xiv. 17. to continue our peace with God; and be with us moreover in the nature of a seal and earnest of our future inheritance, until the time the purchased possession comes. "When he ascended up on high, he accordingly led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men," Eph. iv. 8.

After the Mediator had left the world, and was gone to the Father, the Mission of the Holy Ghost was the most honourable testimonial that could be sent down from heaven, or received upon earth, of the Mediator's certain arrival there, after his departure from earth. And, as that excellent gift includes all gifts and blessings; it is fit that he, who was the procuring cause, should send it, as well as the Father. Thus he had declared, "He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you," John xvi. 14. And "when he, the Holy Ghost, is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:" ver. 8. of the sin of not believing on him, the sin of dishonouring, and the sin of disobeying him: of righteousness; because he went to the Father, an incontestable vindication that he could be no impostor; but was truly righteous, and undoubtedly innocent, in all conversation; were it otherwise, the righteous Father would not have received him, much less given such proofs to the world, of his being well-pleased with him: of judgment; because he is appointed the judge of the prince of this world, and of all the men and spirits who submit to his mis-rule; of all which things the world was

reproved, and convinced of the reproof by the miracles, by the preaching, and by the writings of the apostles, wrought, inspired, dictated by the Holy Ghost.

And what more marvellous display could there be to the then world, of the heavenly power of the departed Mediator, being so powerfully resident still in spirit with his disciples, as to enable them, according to promise, to do greater wonders and miracles than he himself performed, whilst present in body?

There was another end of his ascension; that having, by his resurrection, "conquered him who had the power of death, the devil," he might triumph, like a conqueror, over him, and all the principalities and powers of darkness; and make a shew of them openly, in leading captivity captive: and might receive, in just recompence to his grievous indurances, the reward of his passion, and the travail of his soul. It was meet and fit that the mighty condescension, in emptying himself of glory and majesty for our redemption, and undergoing such bitter cruel things, for no fault of his own, should be signally and notoriously recompensed with exceeding glory. To which end the psalmist (Psa. xxiv. 8, &c.) foretold, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in," and be inaugurated into his everlasting kingdom, and be glorified with that glory, which he had with the Father before the world was. That the ignominy of his cross might be done away; and that he, the Heir, who had not a place to lay his head whilst on earth, might have the disposal of all places in heaven and earth. This again convinces the world of righteousness, i. e. the righteousness of the Father in rewarding the humiliation of the Son with such a glorious exaltation; which made it appear that he forgot not, in due time, to vindicate his Son's personal innocence, so much oppressed with the contradiction and contumely of sinners, and crown his calamity with the greater glory. "Ought not Christ," said he to his disciples, "to suffer these things," according to many prophecies, "and so enter into his glory?" Luke xxiv. 25.

And great reason have we to double our rejoicing in the Lord; for the triumphs of human nature over its grand adversary, who had subjected it to death, in its life and exaltation far above all the dignified angelic host, to the right hand of God. And that we have actually there, by means thereof, the most prevailing Advocate, the most tender and affectionate Intercessor, and most merciful KING and JUDGE; who, by partaking equally of the divine and human nature, is, in the nature of things, the most exact, unexceptionable Mediator between, that can be devised by God or man: being equally interested in, and related and affected to both, the balance of favour, justice, and duty, is held in the most equal hand. And therefore he is the truest MEDIUM, and the properest CENTRE of communication; to derive from God unto man all mercies, gifts, blessings, spiritual and temporal, all promises and performances of covenant; and to convey and recommend from man to God, all addresses of prayer and thanksgiving, all engaged duty and service of repentance, and all sorrows and sufferings for the sake of a good conscience, and to offer up all the sacrifices to heaven that men are now allowed to offer upon earth.

All these intercourses are kept up, and carried on in the powerful name of Christ: so dear to God, and for that reason should be as dear to, and respected by man. Therefore are we required, "Whatsoever we do in word or deed, to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him, Col. iii. 17. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name, ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full," John xvi. 23, 24. To DO ALL in the name of the Lord, is, 1. "To have respect in all things to his will, as knowing we are obliged to live to him, to the honour of his name and doctrine, 2 Cor. v. 14. 2. To be desirous that our actions may be well pleasing to him, 2 Cor. v. 8, 9. 3. To expect acceptance of our actions, prayers, and praises through him, John xiv. 13, 14, 15, 16. Heb. xiii. 15. 4. A recompence of them from him hereafter," Eph. vi. 8. Col. iii. 24. In the name, has several acceptations in Scripture, 1. In the authority of, or commission from, Matt. vii. 22. I am come in my Father's name, John v. 43. I command thee, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to come out of, Acts xvi. 18. So, 1 Cor. v. 4. 2 Thess. iii. 6. James v. 10. agreeably to this, charge in the King's name. 2. For the sake;

He that receiveth a prophet in the name of, Matt. x. 41. 3. Instead of; Comforter shall come, whom God will send in my name, John xiv. 26. 4. Power; I have kept them in thy name, John xvii. 12. 5. In profession and acknowledgment of, belief in; Thus the form of baptism; not by authority or commission from. 6. In aid and assistance; thus David, I come to thee in the name of, &c. 1 Sam. xvii. 45.

In these senses chiefly we come to God, IN THE NAME OF the Mediator, Christ, in dependence upon him for free access even unto, Eph. ii. 16. Heb. x. 19, 22. 1 Pet. iii. 18. acceptance with God; according to those commands of praying, and giving thanks, Acts iv. 12. 1 Cor. iii. 2. Eph. v. 20. Phil. iii. 9. Col. iii. 17. 1 Pet. i. 21. ii. 5. Rev. viii. 3.

The Mediator asserts the right of his name, and assures his followers of the power of it from his own power of granting; and, at the same time, directs them what he is, and what should be their intention in applying to his name, or expecting a favourable return: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son," John xiv. 13.

The dispensation of an INTERCESSOR gives us a true knowledge and notion of ourselves; as it furnishes us with a meet opinion, and proper thoughts of our own very great unworthiness, and manifold defections from the right way, our own conscience bearing witness.

A COMPUTATION of DANIEL'S Seventy Weeks; being an EXPLANATION of his Prophecy concerning the MESSIAH; and also a DEFENCE of the GOSPEL against the Objections of the JEWS.

IT ought not to be wondered at that the Christians insist strongly on the circumstance of time wherein the Messiah was to appear, according to the prophecies of the Old Testament: for there is no character of that great Deliverer more express than this, or that can be with more certainty applied to Jesus Christ. If he were only a man, it did not lie in his power to be born, and to die, exactly at the time appointed by the prophets: nor could he divine, without being a God, what would happen after him, in order to the more full completion of ancient predictions. How should a mere man have known that the sceptre would depart from Judah, and that tribe be dispersed, confounded, and intirely subtracted from the sight of men, in a few years after his death? and yet, in order to the confirming of mankind in what he taught them to believe concerning himself, all this was necessary. It would not have been in his choice to come, by his fore-runner, at the end of sixty-nine weeks of years, to appear himself with great approbation in the middle of the seventieth week, and to be put to death at the end of the same, according to the prophecy of Daniel; and afterwards, according to the same prophecy, to put an end to all the public worship of the Jews, by the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem.

The words of the prophecy, as delivered by Gabriel to Daniel, are, in our English translation, as follow: Chap. ix. ver. 24. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon the holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the streets shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall the Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the prince that shall come, shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week, and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice

sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the over-spreading of abominations he shall make it desolate even unto the consummation, and that determined shall be poured out upon the desolate."

And it being of great moment, for the conviction of Jews and other infidels, who reject the faith of Christ, to have this prophecy well cleared, and made out; in order hereto, we shall observe,

I. That this prophecy relates primarily and especially to the Jews. For it expresses the time that was determined upon the people of Daniel, that is the Jews, and upon the holy city, that is Jerusalem, the whole of which was seventy weeks; implying, that this was the time which God had fore-ordained and determined upon the Jews, for their being his peculiar people; and upon Jerusalem, for its being the holy city; after an expiration of which, an end being put to the Mosaic œconomy, they should be no longer God's peculiar people; and the worship which he had established at Jerusalem, being to be abolished, that city should be no longer a city holy unto him.

II. That these seventy weeks are weeks of years. For among the Jews, as there were sabbatical days, whereby their days were divided into weeks of days, so there were sabbatical years, whereby their years were divided into weeks of years; and this last sort of weeks is that which is here mentioned, so that every one of the weeks of this prophecy contains seven years, and the whole number of seventy weeks contains four hundred and ninety years, at the end whereof this determined time expired. And,

III. This was accomplished at the death of Christ. For then the Jewish church, and the Jewish worship at Jerusalem, were wholly abolished, and the Christian church and the Christian worship succeeded in their stead; then the time which was determined upon the Jews, for their being God's peculiar people, and upon Jerusalem for its being his holy city, being fully expired, thenceforth began the kingdom of the Messiah, and, instead of the Jews, all nations of the earth were called thereunto; and, instead of Jerusalem, every place through the whole earth, where God should be worshipped in spirit and in truth, was made holy unto him: and therefore then the seventy weeks of this prophecy must have their ending; for they were determined and decreed for this purpose, and therefore in this they must have their conclusion; and this all the events, which are in this prophecy predicted to be brought to pass at the conclusion of these weeks, do necessarily prove.

In the 24th verse we have six of them, for the accomplishing of which these seventy weeks are said to be determined; and therefore at the accomplishing of them these weeks must have their ending; they are these following: 1st, "To finish," or restrain, "transgression;" 2d, "To make an end of sins;" 3d, "To make" expiation, or "reconciliation for iniquity;" 4th, "To bring in everlasting righteousness;" 5th, "To seal up," or complete and fulfil, "vision and prophecy;" and, 6th, "To anoint the Most Holy." And all these were accomplished in that great work of our salvation which Christ our Lord undertook for us, and fully completed by his death and passion, and his resurrection from the dead.

The end of these weeks being thus fixed at the death of Christ, it necessarily determines us where to place the beginning of them, that is, four hundred and ninety years before: and therefore the death of Christ, as most learned men agree, falling in the year of the Julian period 4746, and in the Jewish month Nisan, if we reckon four hundred and ninety years backwards, this will lead up to the month Nisan, in the year of the Julian period 4256, which was the very year and month in which Ezra had his commission from Artaxerxes Longimanus king of Persia, and in the 4256th year of the Julian period; and the end of them fell in the very same month of Nisan, in the 4746th year of the Julian period, in which very year and very month Christ our Lord suffered for us, and thereby completed the whole work of our salvation, there being just seventy weeks of years, or four hundred and ninety years, from the one to the other.

It is evident from the prophecy itself, that these weeks must have this beginning, that is, from the date of the commission granted to Ezra. For, first, they are pinned down thereto by

by an exprefs character in the text; and, 2dly, they cannot, agreeable to that and other Scriptures, and the authentic histories of the times to which they relate, have it anywhere else.

First, These weeks must have their beginning from the date of the commission granted to Ezra, because they are pinned down thereto by an exprefs character in the text, and that character is, "the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem." For, that from thence the seventy weeks must have their beginning, the text is very exprefs; and to excite us the more to observe it, introduces it with this remarkable preface, "Know therefore, and understand." But this commandment or decree was that granted to Ezra in the commission with which he was sent into Judæa in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia; and therefore from thence the beginning of these weeks must commence. For the words in the text, "to restore and build Jerusalem," are not to be understood literally, but figuratively, for the restoring of the state of the Jews, as well the political as the ecclesiastical, and the resettling of both according to the law of Moses: and what is more usual in prophecies, than for events to be given in figurative expressions? and what is more common in Scripture, than by Jerusalem to mean the whole political and ecclesiastical state of that people? and for the re-establishing of both these, and the settling them again upon the former basis, from whence they had been overthrown by the Babylonians, and were not as yet but very imperfectly restored, the commission granted to Ezra was very full.

That this figurative interpretation of the words, and no other, must be the true meaning of them, appears from hence, that they cannot be understood in a literal sense; for if they are so to be understood, they can be applicable to no other restoring and rebuilding of Jerusalem than that which was decreed and commanded by Cyrus, at the release of the captivity; for this prophecy was revealed to Daniel before this release, and therefore when it is said therein, that the Epocha of these weeks was to begin from the going forth of the command or decree to restore and build Jerusalem, of what decree can it be more properly understood, than of that which should be first granted next after this prophecy for that purpose, and by virtue whereof this city was accordingly rebuilt, after its having been destroyed by the Babylonians, and was again re-peopled, and inhabited by the same people who had been its former inhabitants? and that this was done by virtue of Cyrus's decree, appears from scripture.

We are told in Isaiah, "that it was Cyrus that should say to Jerusalem, Be thou built; and to the temple, Thy foundations shall be laid." And again, it is said of the same Cyrus, "that God would raise him up, and direct him, that he should build up his city, and release his captives;" where it is to be observed, that he who releases God's captives, and laid the foundation of the temple, was to be the person that was to rebuild Jerusalem; so that he is not only by name, but also by his character and description, plainly pointed out to be the person that was to do this work. And therefore if these words of the prophecy, "to restore and build Jerusalem," are to be understood in a literal sense, they can be understood of no other restoring and building of that city than that which was accomplished by virtue of that decree, and the computation of that seventy weeks must begin from the granting and going forth thereof. But if the computation be begun so high, the 490 years of the said seventy weeks cannot come low enough to reach any of those events which are predicted by this prophecy; for from the first of Cyrus to the death of Christ were 568 years; and therefore if the said 490 years be computed from thence, they will be expired a great many years either before the cutting off or the coming of the Messiah, which ought both to fall within the compass of them according to the exprefs words of this prophecy. It evidently therefore follows from hence, that the words of this prophecy, "to restore and build Jerusalem," cannot be understood in a literal sense. For the sum of the whole argument is thus: if the words are to be understood in a literal sense, they must be understood of that rebuilding of Jerusalem which was accomplished by virtue of Cyrus's decree; and the computation of the seventy weeks, or the 490 years thereof, must begin from the going forth or issuing out of that decree; but it cannot begin from thence for the reason mentioned, and therefore these words cannot be understood

in a literal sense, but must be interpreted to mean figuratively the restoring and rebuilding the church and state of the Jews at Jerusalem: and this Ezra effected by virtue of the command or decree, which was granted to him for this purpose, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus; and therefore here the beginning of these weeks must be placed; and this will be farther proved, if we consider,

Secondly, That it can be placed no-where else, so as to make the ending comport with the intent and purpose of the prophecy, and the accomplishing of the events predicted by it. For, there were four commandments or decrees issued by the kings of Persia, in favour of the Jews, from one of which, according to the express words of the prophecy, the computation of these weeks is to be begun: the first was granted by Cyrus, in the first year of his reign; the second by Darius, about the fourth year of his reign; the third by Artaxerxes to Ezra, in the seventh year of his reign; and the fourth by the same Artaxerxes to Nehemiah, in the twentieth year of his reign: but this computation could not begin from that of Cyrus, nor from that of Darius, nor from that of the twentieth of Artaxerxes, and therefore it must begin from this of the seventh of Artaxerxes granted to Ezra; that it could not begin from any of the other three, I shall shew in their order. And,

First, As to the decree of Cyrus, the 490 years of these weeks cannot be computed from thence, for the reasons already given; that is, because, if they begin from thence, they cannot, by a great many years, reach the events predicted by this prophecy, and therefore no persons who understand this prophecy to relate either the cutting off, or the coming of the Messiah, do begin from thence; for, according to this computation, no chronicle can ever reconcile them to either of them.

Secondly, Neither can the computation of these weeks be begun from the decree granted by Darius. But there having been three Darius's that reigned in Persia (Darius Hystaspes, Darius Nothus, and Darius Codomanus), it is to be inquired, which of these three granted this decree; and then, secondly, it shall be shewn that the computation of these weeks cannot begin from it. And first, of these three Darius's, it is certain it could not be Darius Codomanus; for if the 490 years of these weeks be reckoned from any part of his reign, they will overshoot all the events predicted by this prophecy, by many more years than they will fall short of them if reckoned from the first of Cyrus; and therefore no one hath ever said that he was the Darius that granted this decree. Scaliger indeed, and many others following his authority, have said it of Darius Nothus: but there are invincible arguments against it, which unanswerably demonstrate that it could not be Darius Nothus, but must necessarily be Darius Hystaspes, the first of these three, that reigned in Persia, and none other by whom this decree was issued out; since he, who, according to Ezra, granted this decree, is the same Darius of whom mention is made in Haggai and Zechariah; but that Darius could not be Darius Nothus, but it must necessarily be Darius Hystaspes. For, from the destruction of the first temple of Jerusalem by the Chaldæans, to the reign of Darius Nothus, were 165 years; but from the destruction of it to the time of the second decree, by virtue of which the rebuilding of it was finished, were no more than 70 years, according to the prophet Zechariah: for we find in the book of his prophecies, that in the fourth year of the same Darius, who granted this decree to the Jews (which was also the year in which it was published at Jerusalem), the fast of the fifth month, in which they had mourned for the destruction of the temple; and the fast of the seventh month, in which they had mourned for the utter desolation of the land, which had been brought upon it by the death of Gedaliah; had been observed just 70 years; and no one can doubt, who thoroughly considers that text, but that their mourning for these calamities had been from the very time that they had suffered them; and that therefore it could not be Darius Nothus, but it must be some other Darius then reigning in Persia, within the reach of the said 70 years, who granted this decree; and since the fourth year of Darius Hystaspes was just 70 years from the time in which the city and temple of Jerusalem were destroyed by the Chaldæans (as hath been before observed), this other Darius must necessarily be Darius Hystaspes. But secondly, that the Darius who granted this second decree could not be Darius Nothus, but must necessarily be Darius Hystaspes, will farther appear from the part which Joshua the high-priest and Zerubbabel the

the governor acted in it. For they were the persons who were sent to Jerusalem with the first decree, that which was granted by Cyrus; and they also executed the second decree, that which was granted by Darius. But if this Darius were Darius Nothus, supposing Joshua to be forty years old at the granting of Cyrus's decree (and less at that time he could not be, he having then sons, in the work of the temple, twenty years old and upwards), and supposing Zerubbabel to be thirty years old (and a less age could not comport with his office), the former must have been 157, and the other 147 years old, when this second decree granted by Darius was executed by them; which is utterly improbable. Scaliger, to make out the probability of it, brings instances of several long livers. I deny not it is possible one in a century may be found, who may have reached the first of these ages, that is, that of 157. For we have had a Par, who hath come nigh it, and a Jenkinson who outlived it; but that two together, and colleagues in the same work and business, should live so long, is not likely.

Thirdly, The improbability of this will appear much farther if we consider the words spoken by God himself in Haggai ii. 3. "Who is left among you that saw this house in it's first glory? and how do you see it now; is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?" For this text plainly expresses, that some were then alive, who had seen the first temple, and well remembered the beauty and glory of it; and therefore if this Darius were Darius Nothus, they must have been of an age much more beyond belief than either that of Joshua or Zerubbabel above-mentioned: for, from the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in which the temple was destroyed, to the second of Darius Nothus, had passed 166 years; and therefore, supposing these persons who are here said to have seen the first temple, and remembered the glory of it, had been then seven years old (which is the lowest that can be allowed for such a remembering), they must have been of the age of 173, in the second year of Darius Nothus; and who can think it likely that many (as the text seems to express), or any at all among the people, should then be found of so great an age?

Fourthly, The series of the kings of Persia, as mentioned in Ezra, plainly makes the Darius, who granted this second decree in favour of the Jews, to be the fourth that reigned in that empire, and the fourth king, therein all agree was Darius Hystaspes. For after Cyrus who was the first succeeded Cambyfes the second, and after him Magian the third, and then was Darius Hystaspes the fourth. And in the same order are these kings mentioned in Ezra in respect to the temple, and the rebuilding of it; for he tells us, that during the reign of Cyrus, though he had granted a decree for the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem, yet the work was discouraged all his reign through the fraud of his officers, and corrupted by the bribes of the Samaritans; that in the beginning of the reign of Ahafuerus, who next succeeded (i. e. Cambyfes), the king himself was requested, by letter, to discourage the work, but made no decree against it, out of respect, it is supposed, to his father's decree, which was for it. But Artaxerxes, the next that reigned (i. e. Magian), having no regard to what Cyrus had ordered, made a decree against the work, whereon it wholly ceased (which it had not done before) for the space of two years, until the second year of Darius. This Darius therefore must be Darius Hystaspes, and no other; for he was the fourth of those kings who reigned over the Persian empire.

And thus far having shewn, that the commandment or decree, mentioned in the prophecy for the restoring and rebuilding of Jerusalem, cannot be understood either of the decree of Cyrus, or that of Darius, or of that granted to Nehemiah in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, it remains, that it must then be understood of that granted to Ezra by the same Artaxerxes, in the seventh year of his reign, and no other: for, besides the three commandments or decrees above-mentioned, there was no other commandment or decree ever granted, by any of the kings of Persia, for the restoration of the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem, after the Babylonish captivity, but this only that was granted to Ezra; and therefore, if it cannot be understood of any of the other three, it must then necessarily be this fourth, and none other. And from thence to the death of Christ, are exactly 490 years to a month; for in the month Nisan was the decree granted to Ezra, and in the middle of the same month Nisan, Christ suffered, just 490 years after.

These

These seventy weeks are divided into three particular periods, namely, seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week, that is, forty-nine years, 434 years, and seven years; and the particular events to be accomplished at the end of each of them are, 1st, The restoring and building of the street and ditch of Jerusalem in troublous times; 2d, The coming of the Messiah; and, 3d, His confirming of the covenant of the Gospel with many of the Jews for one week, his causing sacrifice and oblation to cease in the half of that week, and his being cut off at the end thereof. And therefore applying these particular events to their proper periods, the prophecy will be clearly thus; that numbering the said seventy weeks from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem (that is, to restore and establish the church and state of the Jews at Jerusalem), there should be first seven weeks of that number, that is forty-nine years, and then the said church and state (here figuratively expressed by the streets of the city) should be thoroughly reformed and restored, and all such good constitutions and establishments (here figuratively expressed by the ditch) should be made and settled, as should be necessary for the fortifying and preserving of the same, and that all this should be done in troublous times, and amidst great opposition from enemies. That after sixty-and-two weeks from the end of the said seven weeks, that is 434 years, the Messiah should come. And that after this having for one week, the last of the said seventy weeks (that is, for the space of seven years), confirmed the covenant of the Gospel with many of the Jews, he should in the half part of that week (that is, in the latter half part of it) cause the sacrifices and oblations of the temple to cease; and in the conclusion of the whole, that is, in the precise ending of the said seventy weeks, be cut off and die. And accordingly all this was exactly fulfilled and brought to pass.

From this coming of our Saviour began the third period of these seventy weeks, that is the one week, which is spoken of in the 27th verse, the events whereof as there predicted are, that "for that week the Messiah should confirm the covenant with many, and in the half part thereof" (for thus it ought to be rendered, where in our English translation we read the midst) "should cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease:" and so accordingly it came to pass. For during these seven years of his evangelical ministry he did first by his fore-runner, the messenger whom he had sent before him, and then by himself in his personal ministry, confirm the covenant of the Gospel with many of the Jews, who were converted, and admitted thereto; and then in the half part of the said week, that is, in the last half part thereof, when he appeared in his own person in the same ministry on which John was sent before him, he caused the sacrifices and oblations of the temple to cease, that is, first by his preaching of the Gospel, which was to supersede them, and then lastly, by that great sacrifice of himself, which he once offered for all in his death upon the cross at the end of this week, whereby they were all absolutely and finally extinguished for ever.

The whole therefore of this second part or branch of the prophecy is thus: the seventy weeks being thus divided into three periods, that is, into seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, and one week, the first reaches from the time of the going forth of the commandment to Ezra, for the restoring of the church and state of the Jews in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, to the finishing of that work by Nehemiah forty-nine years after; the second, from the end of that period to the coming of the Messiah 434 years after; and the last, from that his coming to his cutting off by his death on the cross, which was one week, or seven years after. And all these put together fully make up the seventy weeks or the 490 years of this prophecy; and, according to this computation, every particular of it hath been fully verified in a completion exactly agreeable thereto, and the whole number of years pointed out thereby exactly answered to a month; for as the going out of the commandment to Ezra, from whence they began, was in the month of Nisan, so the crucifixion of Christ was also in the same month, just 490 years after.

After what is predicted of these three periods follows the third branch, or part of the prophecy, which is contained in the latter end of the 26th and in the latter end of the 27th verses, and foretells events to be brought to pass after the expiration of the said seventy weeks in the times immediately following thereupon, that is, "the destruction of the city

and sanctuary by the people of the prince that was to come," who with armies and desolating abominations should invade Judæa as with a flood, and by a terrible consuming war bring utter ruin and desolation upon it, and all the people of the Jews that should dwell therein, and consummate the same upon them in an absolute destruction. All which accordingly came to pass, and did, in a very signal manner, verify the prophecy in a full completion of every particular thereof: for on the end of these seventy weeks, which were determined upon that people and their holy city, they having slain the Lord of life, they were thereupon cast off by God from being his peculiar people, and the Gentiles were called in their stead, so that henceforth they were no more his people, nor their city Jerusalem any longer holy unto him, but both were given up and destined to utter ruin and destruction.

A Brief Account of the first Spreading of the GOSPEL; together with a Calculation of the present Inhabitants of the World, shewing the Proportion which CHRISTIANITY bears to the religious Opinions of the JEWS, TURKS, HEATHENS, DEISTS, MAHOMETANS, &c.

THE history of the Acts of the Apostles informs us of the success of the word in the primitive times; and we also learn that it was then preached in many other places. Peter speaks of a church at Babylon; Paul proposed a journey to Spain, and it is generally believed he went there, and likewise came to France and Britain. Andrew preached to the Scythians, north of the Black Sea. John is said to have preached in India; and we know that he was at the isle of Patmos, in the Archipelago. Philip is reported to have preached in Upper Asia, Scythia, and Phrygia; Bartholomew in India, on this side the Ganges, Phrygia, and Armenia; Matthew in Arabia, or Asiatic Ethiopia, and Parthia; Thomas in India, as far as the coast of Coromandel, and some say in the island of Ceylon; Simon, the Canaanite, in Egypt, Cyrene, Mauritania, Libya, and other parts of Africa, and from thence to have come to Britain; and Jude is said to have been principally engaged in the Lesser Asia, and Greece. Their labours were evidently very extensive, and very successful; so that Pliny the younger, who lived soon after the death of the apostles, in a letter to the emperor Trajan, observed, that christianity had spread not only through towns and cities, but also through whole countries. Indeed, before this, in the time of Nero, it was so prevalent, that it was thought necessary to oppose it by an imperial edict; and accordingly the proconsuls, and other governors, were commissioned to extirpate it.

Justin Martyr, who lived about the middle of the second century, in his dialogue with Trypho, observed, that there was no part of mankind, whether Greeks or Barbarians, or any others, by what name soever they were called, whether the Sarmatians, or the Nomades, who had no houses, or the Scenites of Arabia Petrea, who lived in tents among their cattle, where supplications and thanksgivings are not offered up to the father and maker of all things, through the name of Jesus Christ. Irenæus, who lived about the year 170, speaks of churches that were founded in Germany, Spain, France, the eastern countries, Egypt, Libya, and the middle of the world. Tertullian, who lived and wrote at Carthage in Africa, about twenty years afterwards, enumerating the countries where christianity had penetrated, makes mention of the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, Armenians, Phrygians, Cappadocians, the inhabitants of Pontus, Asia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the regions of Africa beyond Cyrene, the Romans, and Jews, formerly of Jerusalem, many of the Getuli, many borders of the Mauri, or Moors, in Mauritania;

now Barbary, Morocco, &c. all the borders of Spain, many nations of the Gauls, and the places in Britain which were inaccessible to the Romans; the Dacians, Sarmatians, Germans, Scythians, and the inhabitants of many hidden nations and provinces, and of many islands unknown to him, and which he could not enumerate. The labours of the ministers of the Gospel, in this early period, were so remarkably blessed of God, that the last-mentioned writer observed, in a letter to Scapula, that if he began a persecution, the city of Carthage itself must be decimated thereby. Yea, and so abundant were they in the three first centuries, that ten years constant and almost universal persecution under Diocletian could neither root out the Christians, nor prejudice their cause.

After this, they had great encouragement under several emperors, particularly Constantine and Theodosius, and a very great work of God was carried on; but the ease and affluence, which in these times attended the church, served to introduce a flood of corruption, which by degrees brought on the whole system of Popery, by means of which all appeared to be lost again; and Satan set up his kingdom of darkness, deceit, and human authority, over conscience, through all the Christian world.

In the time of Constantine, one Frumentius was sent to preach to the Indians, and met with great success. A young woman who was a Christian, being taken captive by the Iberians, or Georgians, near the Caspian sea, informed them of the truths of Christianity, and was so much regarded that they sent to Constantine for ministers to come and preach the word to them. About the same time some barbarous nations, having made irruptions into Thrace, carried away several Christians captive, who preached the Gospel; by which means the inhabitants upon the Rhine, and the Danube, the Celtæ, and some other parts of Gaul, were brought to embrace Christianity. About this time also James of Nisbia went into Persia to strengthen the Christians, and preach to the heathens; and his success was so great, that Adiabene was almost intirely Christian. About the year 372, one Moses, a monk, went to preach to the Saracens, who then lived in Arabia, where he had great success; and at this time the Goths, and other northern nations, had the kingdom of Christ further extended amongst them, but which was very soon corrupted with Arianism.

Soon after this the kingdom of Christ was further extended among the Scythian Nomades, beyond the Danube, and about the year 430, a people called the Burgundians received the Gospel. Four years after that Palladius was sent to preach in Scotland, and the next year Patrick was sent from Scotland to preach to the Irish, who before his time were totally uncivilized, and, some say, cannibals; he, however, was useful, and laid the foundations of several churches in Ireland. Presently after this, truth spread further among the Saracens, and in 522 Zathus king of the Colchians encouraged it, and many of that nation were converted to Christianity. About this time also the work was extended in Ireland by Finian, and in Scotland by Constantine and Columba; the latter of whom preached also to the Picts, and Brudæus their king, with several others, were converted. About 541, Adad, the king of Ethiopia, was converted by the preaching of Mansionarius; the Heruli beyond the Danube were now made obedient to the faith, and the Abasgi near the Caucasian mountains.

But now Popery, especially the compulsive part of it, was risen to such an height, that the usual method of propagating the Gospel, or rather what was so called, was, to conquer pagan nations by force of arms, and then oblige them to submit to Christianity, after which bishopricks were erected, and persons then sent to instruct the people. I shall just mention some of those who are said to have laboured thus.

In 596, Austin the monk, Melitus, Justus, Paulinus, and Ruffinian, laboured in England, and in their way were very successful. Paulinus, who appears to have been one of the best of them, had great success in Northumberland; Birinnus preached to the West Saxons, and Felix to the East Angles. In 589, Amandus Gallus laboured in Ghent, Chelenus in Artois, and Gallus and Columbanus in Suabia. In 648, Egidius Gallus in Flanders, and the two Evaldi in Westphalia. In 684, Willifred, in the Isle of Wight. In 688, Ghilianus, in Upper Franconia. In 698, Boniface, or Winifred, among the Thuringians, near Erford, in Saxony, and Willibroad in West-Friesland. Charlemagne conquered Hungary in the year 800, and obliged the inhabitants to profess Christianity, when Modestus preached likewise

likewise to the Venedi, at the source of the Save and Drave. In 833, Ansgarius preached in Denmark, Gaudibert in Sweden, and about 861, Methodius and Cyril, in Bohemia.

About the year 500, the Scythians over-ran Bulgaria, and Christianity was extirpated; but about the year 870 they were re-converted. Poland began to be brought over about the same time, and afterwards, about 960 or 990, the work was further extended amongst the Poles and Prussians. The work was begun in Norway in 960, and in Muscovy in 989; the Swedes propagated Christianity in Finland, in 1168; Lithuania became Christian in 1386, and Samogitia in 1439. The Spaniards forced Popery upon the inhabitants of South-America, and the Portuguese in Asia. The Jesuits were sent into China in 1552. Xavier, whom they call the apostle of the Indians, laboured in the East-Indies and Japan, from 1541 to 1552, and several missions of Capuchins were sent to Africa in the seventeenth century. But blind zeal, gross superstition, and infamous cruelties, so marked the appearances of religion all this time, that the professors of Christianity needed conversion, as much as the heathen world.

A few pious people had fled from the general corruption, and lived obscurely in the vallies of Piedmont and Savoy, who were like the seed of the church. Some of them were now-and-then necessitated to travel into other parts, where they faithfully testified against the corruptions of the times. About 1369 Wickliffe began to preach the faith in England, and his preaching and writings were the means of the conversion of great numbers, many of whom became excellent preachers; and a work was begun which afterwards spread in England, Bohemia, Germany, Switzerland, and many other places. John Hufs and Jerom of Prague preached boldly and successfully in Bohemia, and the adjacent parts. In the following century Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Bucer, Martyr, and many others, stood up against all the rest of the world; they preached, and prayed, and wrote; and nations agreed one after another to cast off the yoke of popery, and to embrace the true doctrine of the Gospel.

In England, episcopal tyranny succeeded to popish cruelty, which, in the year 1620, obliged many pious people to leave their native land and settle in America; these were followed by others in 1629, who laid the foundations of several Gospel churches, which have increased amazingly since that time, and the Redeemer has fixed his throne in that country, where but a little time ago Satan had universal dominion.

In 1632, Mr. Elliot, of New-England, a very pious and zealous minister, began to preach to the Indians, among whom he had great success; several churches of Indians were planted, and some preachers and schoolmasters raised up amongst them; since which time others have laboured amongst them with some good encouragement. About the year 1743, Mr. David Brainerd was sent a missionary to some more Indians, where he preached and prayed, and after some time an extraordinary work of conversion was wrought, and wonderful success attended his ministry. And at this present time (1793) Mr. Kirkland and Mr. Sergeant are employed in the same good work, and God has considerably blessed their labours.

In 1706, the king of Denmark sent a Mr. Ziegenbalg, and some others, to Tranquebar, on the Coromandel coast in the East-Indies, who were useful to the natives, so that many of the heathens were turned to the Lord. The Dutch East-India company likewise, having extended their commerce, built the city of Batavia, and a church was opened there; and the Lord's supper was administered for the first time, on the 3d of January, 1621, by their minister James Hulzibos: from hence some ministers were sent to Amboyna, who were very successful. A seminary of learning was erected at Leyden, in which ministers and assistants were educated, under the renowned Walæus, and some years a great number were sent to the East, at the company's expence, so that in a little time many thousands at Formosa, Malabar, Ternate, Jaffanapatnam, in the town of Columba, at Amboyna, Java, Banda, Macassar, and Malabar, embraced the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ. The work has decayed in some places, but they now have churches in Ceylon, Sumatra, Java, Amboyna, and some other of the spice islands, and at the Cape of Good Hope, in Africa.

But

But none of the moderns have equalled the Moravian brethren in this good work; they have sent missions to Greenland, Labrador, and several of the West-Indian islands, which have been blessed for good. They have likewise sent to Abyssinia, in Africa; but what success they have had, we cannot tell.

The late Mr. Wesley, some time ago, made an effort in the West-Indies, and several of their ministers are now labouring amongst the Caribbs and Negroes, and pleasing accounts have been received of their success.

A SURVEY of the present STATE of the WORLD.

IN this survey I shall consider the world as divided, according to its usual distinction, into four parts, EUROPE, ASIA, AFRICA, and AMERICA, and take notice of the extent of the several countries, their population, civilization, and religion. The article of religion I shall divide into Christian, Jewish, Mahometan, and Pagan; and shall now-and-then hint at the particular sect of them that prevails in the places I shall describe. The following tables will exhibit a more comprehensive view of what I propose, than any thing I can offer on the subject.

E U R O P E.					
Countries.	E X T E N T.		Number of Inhabitants.	Religion.	
	Length. Miles.	Breadth. Miles.			
Great-Britain - - -	680	300	12,000,000	Protestants, of many denominations. Protestants, and Papists. Catholics, Deists, and Protestants. Papists. Papists.	
Ireland - - -	285	160	2,000,000		
France - - -	600	500	24,000,000		
Spain - - -	700	500	9,500,000		
Portugal - - -	300	100	2,000,000		
Sweden, including Sweden Proper, Gothland, Shonen, Lapland, Bothnia, and Finland }	800	500	3,500,000	The Swedes are serious Lutherans, but most of the Laplanders are Pagans, and very superstitious.	
Isle of Gothland - - -	80	23	5,000		
— Oesel - - -	45	24	2,500		
— Oeland - - -	84	9	1,000		
— Dago - - -	26	23	1,000		
— Aland - - -	24	20	800	Lutherans of the Helvetic confession. Ditto. Ditto. Ditto. Ditto.	
— Hogland - - -	9	5	100		
Denmark - - -	244	114	360,000		
Isle of Zeeland - - -	60	60	284,000		
— Funen - - -	38	32	144,000		
— Arroe - - -	8	2	200	Ditto. Ditto. Ditto. Ditto. Ditto.	
— Iceland - - -	435	185	60,000		
— Langeland - - -	27	12	3,000		
— Laland - - -	38	30	148,000		
— Falster - - -	27	12	3,000		
— Mona, or Moon - - -	14	5	600	Ditto. Ditto. Ditto. Ditto. Ditto.	
— Alsen - - -	15	6	600		
— Femeren - - -	13	8	1,000		
— Bornholm - - -	20	12	2,000		
Greenland - - -	Undiscovered.		7,000	Lutherans. Pagans, and Moravian Christians. Lutherans. Ditto. Ditto, and Pagans.	
Norway - - -	750	170	724,000		
24 Faro Isles - - -			4,500		
Danish Lapland - - -	285	172	100,000		
Poland - - -	700	680	9,000,000	Papists, Lutherans, Calvinists, & Jews. Calvinists, Catholics, and Lutherans.	
Prussia* - - -	400	160	2,500,000		

* The rest of the Prussian dominions, being scattered about in several countries, are counted to those countries where they lie.

Countries.	E U R O P E.		Number of Inhabitants.	Religion.
	EXTENT. Length. Miles.	Breadth. Miles.		
Sardinia	135	57	600,000	Papists.
Sicily	180	92	1,000,000	Ditto.
Italy	660	120	20,000,000	Ditto.
United Netherlands	150	150	2,000,000	Protestants of several denominations.
Austrian Netherlands	200	200	2,500,000	Papists and Protestants.
Switzerland	260	100	2,880,000	Ditto.
The Grisons	100	62	800,000	Lutherans and Papists.
The Abbey of St. Gall	24	10	50,000	Ditto.
Neufchatel	32	20	100,000	Calvinists.
Valais	80	30	440,000	Papists.
Piedmont	140	98	900,000	Ditto, and Protestants.
Savoy	87	60	720,000	Ditto.
Geneva, City			24,000	Calvinists.
Bohemia	478	322	2,100,000	Papists and Moravians.
Hungary	300	200	2,500,000	Papists.
Germany	600	500	20,000,000	Ditto, and Protestants.
Russia in Europe	1500	1100	22,000,000	Greek Church.
Turkey in Europe	1000	900	18,000,000	Greek Christians, Jews, & Mahometans
Budziac Tartary	300	60	1,200,000	Ditto.
Lesser Tartary	390	65	1,000,000	Ditto.
Crim Tartary	145	80	500,000	Ditto.
Isle of Tenedos	5	3	200	Mahometans.
— Negropont	90	25	25,000	Ditto.
— Lemnos	25	25	4,000	Ditto.
— Paros	36 in compafs.		4,500	Greek Christians.
— Lesbos, or Mitylene	160 in compafs.		30,000	Mahometans and Greeks.
— Naxia	100 in compafs.		8,000	Greeks and Papists.
— Scio, or Chios	112 in compafs.		113,000	Greek Christians, Papists, & Mahom.
— Nio	40 in compafs.		1,000	Ditto.
— Scyros	60 in compafs.		1,000	Ditto.
— Mycone	36 in compafs.		3,000	Ditto.
— Samos	30 15		12,000	Mahometans.
— Nicaria	70 in compafs.		3,000	Greek Christians.
— Andros	120 in compafs.		4,000	Ditto.
— Cyclades, <i>Delos the Chief.</i>			700	Ditto.
— Zia	40 in compafs.		8,000	Ditto.
— Cerigo or Cytheræa	50 in compafs.		1,000	Ditto.
— Santorin	36 in compafs.		10,000	Ditto, and Papists.
— Policandra	8 in compafs.		400	Ditto.
— Patmos	18 in compafs.		600	Ditto.
— Sephanto	36 in compafs.		5,000	Greeks.
— Claros	40 in compafs.		1,700	Mahometans.
— Amorgo	36 in compafs.		4,000	Greek Christians.
— Leros	18 in compafs.		800	Christians and Mahometans.
— Thermia	40 in compafs.		6,000	Greek Christians.
— Stampalia	50 in compafs.		3,000	Ditto.
— Salamis	50 in compafs.		1,000	Ditto.
— Scarpanta	20 in compafs.		2,000	Ditto.
— Cephalonia	130 in compafs.		50,000	Ditto.
— Zant	50 in compafs.		30,000	Greek Christians.
— Milo	60 in compafs.		40,000	Ditto.
— Corfu	120 in compafs.		60,000	Ditto.
— Candia, or Crete	200 60		400,000	Ditto, and Mahometans.
— Coos, or Stanchia	70 in compafs.		12,800	Mahometans and Christians.
— Rhodes	60 25		120,000	Ditto.
— Cyprus	150 70		300,000	Mahometans.

Countries.	A S I A.		Number of Inhabitants.	Religion.
	Length. Miles.	Breadth. Miles.		
TURKEY IN ASIA contains Anato- lia, Syria, Palestine, Diabekr, Turkomania, and Georgia -	1000	800	20,000,000	Mahometanism is most prevalent, but there are many Greek, Latin, Eu- tychian, and Armenian Christians.
Arabia - - - - -	1300	1200	16,000,000	Mahometans.
Perfia - - - - -	1280	1140	20,000,000	Ditto, of the Sect of Ali.
Great Tartary, - - - - -	4000	1200	40,000,000	Mahometans and Pagans.
Siberia - - - - -	2800	960	7,500,000	Greek Christians and Pagans.
Samojedia - - - - -	2000	370	1,900,000	Pagans.
Kamtschatka - - - - -	540	236	900,000	Ditto.
Nova Zembla - - - - -	Undiscovered.		thinly inhabit.	Ditto.
China - - - - -	1400	1260	60,000,000	Ditto.
JAPAN contains Nippon Island -	900	360	10,000,000	Ditto.
Isle of Ximo - - - - -	210	200	3,000,000	Ditto.
— Xicoco - - - - -	117	104	1,800,000	Ditto.
— Tsussima - - - - -	39	34	40,000	Ditto.
— Iki - - - - -	20	17	6,000	Ditto.
— Kubiteffima - - - - -	30	26	8,000	Ditto.
— Matounfa - - - - -	54	26	50,000	Ditto.
— Fastiffia - - - - -	36	34	30,000	Ditto.
— Firando - - - - -	30	28	10,000	Ditto.
— Amacufa - - - - -	27	24	6,000	Ditto.
— Awafi - - - - -	30	18	5,000	Ditto.
India beyond the Ganges - - - -	2000	1 00	50,000,000	Mahometans and Pagans.
Indostan - - - - -	2000	1500	110,000,000	Ditto.
Thibet - - - - -	1200	480	10,000,000	Pagans.
Isle of Ceylon - - - - -	250	200	2,000,000	Pagans, except the Dutch Christians.
— Maldives - - - - -	1000	in number.	100,000	Mahometans.
— Sumatra - - - - -	1000	100	2,100,000	Ditto, and Pagans.
— Java - - - - -	580	100	2,700,000	Ditto.
— Timor - - - - -	240	54	300,000	Ditto, and a few Christians.
— Borneo - - - - -	800	700	8,000,000	Ditto.
— Celebes - - - - -	510	240	2,000,000	Ditto.
— Boutam - - - - -	75	30	80,000	Mahometans.
— Carpentyn - - - - -	30	3	2,000	Christian Protestants.
— Ourature - - - - -	18	6	3,000	Pagans.
— Pullo Lout - - - - -	60	36	10,000	Ditto.

Besides the little Islands of Manaar, Aripem, Caradivia, Pengandiva, Analativa, Nainandiva, and Nindundiva, which are inhabited by Christian Protestants.

And Banca, Madura, Bally, Lambeck, Flores, Solor, Leolana, Panterra, Miscomby, and several others, inhabited by Pagans and Mahometans.

The MOLUCCAS are,

— Banda - - - - -	20	10	6,000	Pagans and Mahometans.
— Buro - - - - -	25	10	7,000	Ditto.
— Amboyna - - - - -	25	10	7,500	Christians;—the Dutch have 25 Ch.
— Ceram - - - - -	210	45	250,000	Pagans and Mahometans.
— Gillola - - - - -	190	110	650,000	Ditto.

And Pullo-way, Pullo-rin, Nera, Guamanapi, Guilliaien, Ternate, Motir, Machian, and Bachian, which are inhabited by Pagans and Mahometans.

The PHILIPPINE ISLANDS are supposed to be about 11,000;—some of the chief are,

Isle of Mindanao - - - - -	60	40	18,000	Pagans and Mahometans.
— Bahol - - - - -	24	12	6,000	Ditto.
— Layta - - - - -	48	27	10,000	Ditto.
— Parragon - - - - -	240	60	100,000	Ditto.

COMPARATIVE VIEW OF THE CHRISTIAN WORLD.

487

Countries.	A S I A.		Number of Inhabitants.	Religion.
	Length. Miles.	Breadth. Miles.		
The CALAMINES are Sebu -	60	24	10,000	Papists.
— Mindora - - -	60	36	12,000	Pagans and Mahometans.
— Philippina - - -	185	120	104,000	Ditto.
— Negroes Ifle - - -	150	60	80,000	Papists.
— Manilla - - -			31,000	Ditto, and Pagans.

The Ladrone Iflands are inhabited by most uncivilized Pagans.

New Holland - - -	2500	2000	12,000,000	Pagans;—1 or 2 Ministers are there.
New Zealand* - - -	960	180	1,120,000	Ditto.
New Guiney - - -	1000	360	1,900,000	Ditto.
New Britain - - -	180	120	900,000	Ditto.
New Ireland - - -	180	60	700,000	Ditto.
Onrong Java - - -	A Cluster of Ifles.			Ditto.
New Caledonia - - -	260	30	170,000	Ditto.
New Hebrides - - -				Ditto.
Friendly Ifles - - -	20 in number.			Ditto.
Sandwich Ifles - - -	7 in number.		400,000	Ditto.
Society Ifles - - -	6 in number.		800,000	Ditto.
Kurile Ifles - - -	45 in number.		50,000	Ditto.
Pelew Ifles - - -				Ditto.
Oonalashka Ifle - - -	40	20	3,000	Ditto.
The other South-Sea Iflands -				Ditto.

A F R I C A.

Egypt - - -	600	250	2,200,000	Mahometans and Jews.
Nubia - - -	940	600	3,000,000	Ditto.
Barbary - - -	1800	500	3,500,000	Mahometans, Jews, and Christians.
Biledulgerid - - -	2500	350	3,500,000	Ditto.
Zaara, or the Defert - - -	3400	660	800,000	Ditto.
Abyssinia - - -	900	800	5,800,000	Armenian Christians.
Abex - - -	540	130	1,600,000	Christians and Pagans.
Negroland - - -	2200	840	18,000,000	Pagans.
Loango - - -	410	300	1,500,000	Ditto.
Congo - - -	540	220	2,000,000	Ditto.
Angola - - -	360	250	1,400,000	Ditto.
Benguela - - -	430	180	1,600,000	Ditto.
Mataman - - -	450	240	1,500,000	Ditto.
Ajan - - -	900	300	2,500,000	Ditto.
Zanguebar - - -	1400	350	3,000,000	Ditto.
Monoemugi - - -	900	660	2,000,000	Ditto.
Sofala - - -	480	300	1,000,000	Ditto.
Terra de Natal - - -	600	350	2,000,000	Ditto.
Caffraria, or the Hottentots country - - - }	708	660	2,000,000	Ditto, & a few Christians at the Cape.
Ifle of Madagascar - - -	1000	220	2,000,000	Pagans and Mahometans.
— St. Mary - - -	54	9	5,000	French Papists.
— Mascarin - - -	39	30	17,000	Ditto.
— St. Helena - - -	21 in compass.		1,000	English and French Christians.
— Annabon - - -	16	14	4,000	Portuguese Papists.
— St. Thomas - - -	25	23	9,000	Pagans.

* Two Iflands.

Countries.	A F R I C A.		Number of Inhabitants.	Religion.
	E X T E N T.			
	Length. Miles.	Breadth. Miles.		
Isle of Zocotora - - -	80	54	10,000	Mahometans.
—— Comora Isles - - -	5 in number.		5,000	Ditto.
—— Mauritius - - -	150 in compafs.		10,000	French Papifts.
—— Bourbon - - -	90 in compafs.		15,000	Ditto.
—— Madeiras - - -	3 in number.		10,000	Papifts.
—— Cape Verd Ifles - - -	10 in number.		20,000	Ditto.
—— Canaries - - -	12 in number.		30,000	Ditto.
—— Azores - - -	9 in number.		100,000	Ditto.
—— Maltha - - -	15	8	1,200	Ditto.

	A	M	E	R	I	C	A.
Brasil - - - - -		2900	900	14,000,000			Pagans and Papifts.
Paraguay - - - - -		1140	460	10,000,000			Pagans.
Chili - - - - -		1200	500	2,000,000			Pagans and Papifts.
Peru - - - - -		1800	600	10,000,000			Ditto.
Country of the Amazons - - - - -		1200	900	8,000,000			Pagans.
Terra Firma - - - - -		1400	700	10,000,000			Pagans and Papifts.
Guiana - - - - -		780	480	2,000,000			Ditto.
Terra Magellanica - - - - -		1400	460	9,000,000			Pagans.
Old Mexico - - - - -		2220	600	13,500,000			Ditto, and Papifts.
New Mexico - - - - -		2000	1000	14,000,000			Ditto.
The States of America - - - - -		1000	600	3,700,000			Chriftians, of various denominations.
Terra de Labrador, Nova-Scotia, Louifiana, Canada, and all the Country inland from Mexico to Hudfon's-Bay - - - - -		1680	600	8,000,000			{ Chriftians, of various denominations, but moft of the North-American Indians are Pagans.
California, and from thence along the Western Coaft to 70 degrees fouth latitude, and fo far inland as to meet the above article - - - - -		2820	1380	9,000,000			Pagans.
All the north of 70 degrees - - - - -		unknown.					Pagans.
Cape Breton - - - - -		400	110	20,000			Chriftians.
— Newfoundland - - - - -		350	200	1,400			Proteftants.
— Cumberland's Ifle - - - - -		780	300	10,000			Pagans.
— Madre de Dios - - - - -		105	30	8,000			Ditto.
— Terra del Fuego - - - - -		120	36	5,000			Ditto.
All the Iflands in the Vicinity of Cape Horn - - - - -							Pagans.
The Bermudas extend - - - - -		16	5	20,000			Half Englifh, and Half Slaves.
The LITTLE ANTILLES are - - - - -							
— Aruba - - - - -		5	3	200			Dutch and Pagan Negroes.
— Curaffoa - - - - -		30	10	11,000			Ditto.
— Bonaire - - - - -		10	3	300			Ditto.
— Margaretta - - - - -		40	24	18,000			Spaniards, and Pagan Negroes.
— St. Trinidad - - - - -		90	60	100,000			Ditto.
The BAHAMAS are - - - - -							
— Bahama - - - - -		50	16	16,000			Pagans.
— Providence - - - - -		28	11	6,000			Ditto.

Befides Eleuthera, Harbour, Lucayonegua, Androfs, Cigateo, Guanaliana, Yumeta, Samana, Yuma, Mayaguana, Ynagua, Caieos, and Triangula—Pagans.

The ANTILLES are				
— Cuba - - -	700	60	1,000,000	Papifts.
— Jamaica - - -	140	60	400,000	Englifh, and Pagan Negroes.
— St. Domingo - - -	450	150	1,000,000	French, Spaniards, and Negroes.
— Porto Rico - - -	100	49	300,000	Spaniards and Negroes.
— Vache, or Cows I. - - -	18	2	1,000	Ditto.

The VIRGINIA ISLES are 12 in number, of which Danes Ifland is the principal—Proteftants.

The

A M E R I C A.

Countries.	E X T E N T.		Number of Inhabitants.	Religion.
	Length. Miles.	Breadth. Miles.		
The CARIBBEES are				
— St. Cruz - - -	30	10	13,500	Danish Protestants.
— Anguilla - - -	30	9	6,000	Protestants and Negroes.
— St. Martin - - -	21	12	7,500	Ditto.
— St. Bartholomew - - -	6	4	720	Ditto.
— Barbuda - - -	20	12	7,500	Ditto.
— Saba - - -	5	4	1,500	Ditto.
— Guadelupe - - -	45	38	50,000	Catholics, and Pagan Negroes.
— Marigalante - - -	15	12	5,400	Ditto.
— Tobago - - -	32	9	2,400	Ditto.
— Defiada - - -	12	6	1,500	Ditto.
— Granada - - -	30	15	13,500	English, and Pagan Negroes.
— St. Lucia - - -	23	12	5,000	Ditto, and Native Pagan Caribbs.
			Whites. Negroes.	
— St. Eustatia - - -	6	4	5,000 15,000	Dutch, English, &c.
— St. Christopher - - -	20	7	6,000 36,000	English.
— Nevis - - -	6	4	5,000 10,000	Ditto.
— Antigua - - -	20	20	7,000 30,000	Ditto.
— Montserrat - - -	6	6	5,000 10,000	Ditto.
— Martinico - - -	60	30	20,000 50,000	French.
— St. Vincent's - - -	24	18	8,000 5,000	The 8,000 are Native Caribbs.
— Barbadoes - - -	21	14	30,000 100,000	English.
— Dominica - - -	28	13	40,000	Ditto, 2,000 of them Native Caribbs.
— St. Thomas - - -	15 in compass.		8,000	Danish Protestants.

This, as nearly as we can obtain information, is the state of the world; though in many countries, as Turkey, Arabia, Great Tartary, Africa, and America, except the United States, and most of the Asiatic Islands, we have no accounts of the number of inhabitants, that can be relied on. We have, therefore, only calculated the extent, and counted a certain number on an average, upon a square mile; in some countries more, and in others less, according as circumstances determine. A few general remarks upon it will conclude this part.

First, The inhabitants of the world, according to this calculation, amount to about seven hundred and thirty-one millions; four hundred and twenty millions of whom are still in pagan darkness; an hundred and thirty millions the followers of Mahomet; an hundred millions catholics; forty-four millions protestants; thirty millions of the Greek and Armenian churches, and perhaps seven millions of Jews. It must undoubtedly strike every considerate mind, what a vast proportion of the sons of Adam there are, who yet remain in the most deplorable state of heathen darkness, without any means of knowing the true God, except what are afforded them by the works of nature; and utterly destitute of the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ, or of any means of obtaining it. In many of these countries they have no written language, consequently no Bible, and are only led by the most childish customs and traditions. Such, for instance, are all the middle and back parts of North America, the inland parts of South America, the South-Sea Islands, New Holland, New Zealand, New Guiney; and we may add Great Tartary, Siberia, Samoiedia, and the other parts of Asia contiguous to the frozen sea; the greatest part of Africa, the island of Madagascar, and many places beside. In many of these parts also they are cannibals, feeding upon the flesh of their slain enemies, with the greatest brutality and eagerness. The truth of this was ascertained, beyond a doubt, by the late eminent navigator, Cooke, of the New Zealanders, and some of the inhabitants of the western coast of America. Human sacrifices are also very frequently offered, so that scarce a week elapses without instances of this kind. They are in general poor, barbarous, naked pagans, as destitute of civilization as they are of true religion.

Secondly, Barbarous as these poor heathens are, they appear to be as capable of knowledge as we are; and in many places, at least, have discovered uncommon genius and tractableness;

bleness; and it may be reasonably questioned whether most of the barbarities practised by them have not originated in some real or supposed affront, and are therefore more properly acts of self-defence than proofs of inhuman and blood-thirsty dispositions.

Thirdly, In other parts, where they have a written language, as in the East-Indies, China, Japan, &c. they know nothing of the Gospel. The Jesuits indeed once made many converts to popery among the Chinese; but their highest aim seemed to be to obtain their good opinion; for though the converts professed themselves Christians, yet they were allowed to honour the image of CONFUCIUS their great lawgiver; and at length their ambitious intrigues brought upon them the displeasure of government, which terminated in the suppression of the mission, and almost, if not intirely, of the Christian name there. It is also a melancholy fact, that the vices of Europeans have been communicated where-ever they themselves have been; so that the religious state of even heathens has been rendered worse by intercourse with them!

Fourthly, A very great proportion of Asia and Africa, with some part of Europe, are Mahometans: and those in Persia, who are of the sect of Hali, are the most inveterate enemies to the Turks; and they in return abhor the Persians. The Africans are some of the most ignorant of all the Mahometans; especially the Arabs, who are scattered through all the northern parts of Africa, and live upon the depredations which they are continually making upon their neighbours.

Fifthly, In respect to those who bear the Christian name, a very great degree of ignorance and immorality abounds amongst them. There are Christians, so called, of the Greek and Armenian churches, in all the Mahometan countries; but they are, if possible, more ignorant and vicious than the Mahometans themselves. The Georgian Christians, who are near the Caspian Sea, maintain themselves by selling their neighbours, relations, and children, for slaves to the Turks and Persians. And it is remarked, that if any of the Greeks of Anatolia turn mussulmans, the Turks never set any store by them, on account of their being so much noted for dissimulation and hypocrisy. It is well known that most of the members of the Greek church are very ignorant. Papists also are in general ignorant of divine things, and very vicious. Nor do the bulk of the church of England much exceed them, either in knowledge or holiness; and many errors, and much looseness of conduct, are to be found amongst dissenters of all denominations. The Lutherans in Denmark are much on a par with the ecclesiastics in England; and the face of most Christian countries presents a dreadful scene of ignorance, hypocrisy, and profligacy. Various baneful and pernicious errors appear to gain ground, in almost every part of Christendom; the truths of the Gospel, and even the Gospel itself, are awfully attacked; and every method that the enemy can invent, particularly by disseminating heretical doctrines, is employed to undermine the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All these things are loud calls to Christians, and especially to ministers, to exert themselves to the utmost in their several spheres of action, and to try to enlarge the boundaries of the pure Gospel as much as possible.

An Account of some of the most pernicious HERESIES in the CHRISTIAN CHURCH; with the Names of the HERETICS, and the Times when they lived.

A N T I N O M I A N S.

THESE heretics first appeared in the year 1530, and took their origin from John Agricola. These were called Antinomians for rejecting the moral law, as being of no use under the gospel dispensation. They say that good works do not further, nor evil works hinder salvation: that murder, adultery, drunkenness, &c. are sins in the wicked, but not in them, and therefore Abraham's lying and dissembling was no sin; that the child of grace, being once assured of salvation, never doubteth afterwards: that no man should be troubled in conscience for sin; that no Christian should be exhorted to perform the duties of christianity; that

that an hypocrite may have all the graces that were in Adam before the fall; that Christ is the only subject of all grace; that no christian believeth, and worketh any good, but Christ only believeth and worketh: that God does not love any man for his holiness; that sanctification is no evidence of justification. The modern ones also reject the law, and maintain universal redemption; viz. that Christ shed his blood on the cross, and gave his life as a ransom for all men without exception, as well for those that die in Christ, as others that die in their sins; the only difference being, the latter are ignorant of them, and, dying so, will remain after death under dreadful terror and apprehension of punishment until the day of judgment, when Christ will manifest that he died for the sins of the whole world; and will then, according to the full meaning of that expression, "the times of the restitution of all things," claim all mankind as his inheritance, gift, and purchase, and make all the children of Adam happy with him for ever.

A R I A N S.

They followed the opinion of Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, in the time of the patriarch Alexander: he broached his heresy in the beginning of the fourth century. The Arians denied the three persons in the holy Trinity to be of the same essence; asserted that there was a time when the Son was not; that he was created in time, before all other beings, was mutable in nature, and, like the angels, liable to sin; and that, being united to human flesh, he supplied the place of a human soul, and consequently was subject to sufferings and pain: they also affirmed, that the Holy Ghost is not God, but only a creature of the Son. In their doxologies, they ascribe "Glory to the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Ghost." In the reign of Constantius this heresy revived, favoured by his authority, every where destroying the Christians, and dividing itself into new sects of Semi-Arians, Photinians (the same as Socinians), Aetians, Eunomians, Macedonians, &c. All which were anathematized by the second general council held at Constantinople, and Theodosius the Great, by his authority, repressed this heresy. Valens, the brother of Valentinian, being promoted to the eastern empire, openly favoured the Arian heresy, adorning his followers with dignities and honours; the Christians every where, till the year 369, being involved in troubles and persecutions. In which time Theodosius the Great, being colleague with Gratian, gave peace, rest and protection to the church. He restrained and depressed every heresy, and happily reigned for sixteen years.

A R M I N I A N S.

The doctrines called Arminianism derive their origin from Arminius, a celebrated minister of Amsterdam, and afterwards professor of theology in the university of Leyden. Though educated in Geneva, and having imbibed the doctrines concerning predestination and grace, maintained by Calvin, Beza, Zanchius, &c. he began in the year 1591 to express his doubts concerning them; and, upon further inquiry, adopted sentiments more nearly resembling those of the Lutherans, than of the Calvinists.—The distinguishing tenets of the Arminians may be comprised in the five following articles; namely predestination, universal redemption, the corruption of man, conversion, and perseverance.

With respect to the first, they maintained, "That God, from all eternity, determined to bestow salvation on those who, he foresaw, would persevere unto the end in their faith in Christ Jesus; and to inflict everlasting punishment on those who should continue in their unbelief, and resist, unto the end, his divine succours:" so that election was conditional, and reprobation in like manner the result of foreseen infidelity, and persevering wickedness.

On the second article, the Arminians taught, "That Jesus Christ, by his sufferings and death, made an atonement for the sins of all mankind in general, and of every individual in particular; that, however, none but those who believe in him can be partakers of their divine benefit."

On the third, they held, "That true faith cannot proceed from the exercise of our natural faculties and powers, nor from the force and operation of free-will; since man, in consequence of his natural corruption, is incapable either of thinking or doing any good thing; and that therefore it is necessary, in order to his conversion and salvation, that he be regenerated and renewed by the operation of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God through Jesus Christ."

Fourthly, "That this divine grace, or energy of the Holy Ghost, begins and perfects every thing that can be called good in man, and consequently all good works are to be attributed to God alone: that, nevertheless, this grace is offered to all, and does not force men to act against their inclination, but may be resisted, and rendered ineffectual, by the perverse will of the impenitent sinner."—Some modern Arminians interpret this and the last article with a greater latitude.

Fifthly, "That God gives to the truly faithful, who are regenerated by his grace, the means of preserving themselves in this state;" and though the first Arminians made some doubt with respect to the closing part of this article, their followers uniformly maintain, "that the regenerate may lose true justifying faith, forfeit their state of grace, die in their sins, and perish for ever!"

D E I S T S.

The persons thus denominated, in christian countries, are those who, acknowledging all the obligations and duties of natural religion, disbelieve the christian scheme, or revealed religion. They are so called from

from their belief in God alone, in opposition to Christians. This name seems to have been first assumed, as the denomination of a party, about the middle of the sixteenth century, by some gentlemen in France and Italy, who were desirous of thus disguising their opposition of Christianity by a more honourable appellation than that of Atheists. Viret, an eminent reformer, mentions several persons, in his epistle dedicatory, prefixed to the second tome of his *Instruction Chretienne*, published in 1653, who called themselves by a new name, that of Deists. These, he tells us, professed to believe in God, but shewed no regard to Jesus Christ, and considered the doctrine of the apostles and evangelists as fables and dreams. He adds, that they laughed at all religion, though they outwardly conformed to the religion of those with whom they lived, or whom they wished to please, or feared to offend. Some, he observes, professed to believe the immortality of the soul; others denied both this doctrine, and that of Providence. Many of them were considered as persons of acute and subtil genius, and took pains in disseminating their notions.

D O N A T I S T S.

Donatus, an African, after the death of Majorinus, was bishop of Carthage, and gave a name to his own sect: he began to be known about the year 329; and was a man of consummate arrogance, and intolerable pride, who treated ignominiously the civil officers: he was full of enthusiasm, and boasted of answers coming to him from heaven.

Osiander gives this account of the Donatists, which we thought fit to insert: "They (says he) in process of time acted many things wickedly and tyrannically: they exercised robbery, and lorded it over the grounds and towns of some. Julian the apostate, in odium to the Christians, gave them churches, and they made cruel devastations of the catholic Christians." Optatus, bishop of Miletus, declares, that they, in the persecution, commanded that the eucharist of the orthodox bishops should be thrown to the dogs; and that those dogs thereupon running mad, tore in pieces their masters the Donatists. A just judgment of God for their unheard-of blasphemy!

These Donatists were called Parminians, Montanists and Montenses. They were men full of vanity and deceitfulness. For the most part, they used clubs. In their drunken bacchanalia they took the liberty of associating, rambling, jesting, drinking and lying with single women. Their wicked cause they defended with clubs, swords and slings. They opposed the civil laws. They washed the walls of their temples; they levelled the altars; and broke the chalices in those places where the catholics had their assemblies, and celebrated the Lord's supper.

E U S E B I A N S.

This heresy takes its name from Eusebius of Nicomedia, who was first bishop of Berytus in Syria, afterwards of Nicomedia, then the seat of the eastern empire. He received into favour Arius, lately ejected by the Nicene council. He taught, with Arius, that the Son was not only a creature, but another, different from the Only Begotten; and was not made from the same substance, and no manner of way partaker of the same. He was not contented with this notion, but became the captain and leader of the whole faction, and the chief promoter of all the mischiefs which the Arians machinated against the great Athanasius; from whence his followers were styled Eusebians. In the Nicene council he took part with Arius, till his condemnation: then wheeling about, embraced that faith. But three months after (so fickle was his nature) revolting, by the emperor's command was sent into banishment. After the expiration of three years, he offered a penitential libel; and confessing a plenary consent to the Nicene articles, was recalled from his exile, and restored to his see: but so fickle and wavering was he, that, upon Constantius's coming to the throne, he revolted again, and (Paul, bishop of Constantinople, being ejected) leaving Nicomedia, he immediately thrust himself into his episcopal see. This unstable heretic died at the time of the council of Antioch.

E U T Y C H I A N S.

These were ancient heretics, who denied the two natures in Christ: they took their appellation from Eutyches, the archimandrite, or abbot of a monastery at Constantinople, who began to propagate his opinion A. D. 448. At first, he held, that the Logos, Word, brought his body down with him from heaven, which was a near approach to the heresy of Apollinarius; and though he afterwards testified the contrary, in a synod at Constantinople, wherein he was condemned, yet he could not be brought to acknowledge that the body of Jesus Christ was consubstantial with ours; but that the flesh in Christ was only feigned, not true: that Christ did not suffer truly, but only in shew and appearance; and that the human actions of Christ were mere fancies.

G N O S T I C S.

The word Gnostic signifies a learned or enlightened person; a name which almost all the ancient heretics affected to take, to express that new knowledge and extraordinary light to which they made pretensions. They divided all nature into three kinds of beings, viz. hylic, or material; psychic, or animal; and pneumatic, or spiritual. The first, who were material, and incapable of knowledge, inevitably perished, both soul and body; the psychic, or animal, who were the middle between the other two, were capable either of being

being saved or damned, according to their good or evil actions; and the third, namely, the pneumatic or spiritual, such as the Gnostics themselves pretended to be, were all certainly saved.

Epiphanius ascribes the origin of the Gnostics to Simon Magus; and says, they acknowledged two principles, a good and a bad. They supposed there were eight different heavens, each of which was governed by its particular prince: the prince of the seventh heaven, whom they named Sabaoth, created the heavens and the earth, the six heavens below him, and a great number of angels. In the eighth heaven they placed their Barbelo, or Barbero, whom they sometimes called the father, and sometimes the mother of the universe. All the Gnostics distinguished the creator of the universe from God, who made himself known to men by his Son, whom they acknowledged to be the Christ.—They denied the Word was made flesh; and asserted that Jesus Christ was not born of the virgin Mary; that he had a body only in appearance, and that he did not suffer in reality. They neither believed a resurrection, nor a judgment to come; but imagined that those who had not been instructed in their maxims would return into the world, and pass into the bodies of hogs, and other of the like animals. They had several apocryphal books, as the Gospel of St. Philip, the Revelations of Adam, the Gospel of Perfection, &c.

M A N I C H E E S.

These were a sect of heretics among the Christians in the third century; they were the followers of Manes, who made his appearance in the reign of the emperor Probus; and pretended to be the Comforter, whom our Saviour promised to send into the world. He taught, that there are two principles, or gods, co-eternal and independent on each other: the one, the author of all evil; and the other, of all good; a doctrine which he borrowed from the Persian Magi. He held that our souls were made by the good principle, and our bodies by the evil one; and that the souls of his followers passed through the elements of the moon, and from thence to the sun, where being purified, they went to God, and became united with his essence; but as for the souls of other men, they either went to hell, or were united to other bodies. He alleged that Christ had his residence in the sun, the Holy Ghost in the air, Wisdom in the moon, and the Father in the abyss of light. He is also charged with denying the resurrection, and condemning marriage; with teaching that Christ was the serpent that tempted Eve; with forbidding the use of eggs, cheese, milk, and wine, as proceeding from the bad principle; with using a different kind of baptism from that of the church; with teaching that magistrates were not to be obeyed, and with condemning the most lawful wars, &c. Mr. J. Sharpe concludes his recital of the monstrous errors of this odious heresiarch in these words: "I cannot transcribe any more of their blasphemous tenets: but if the reader is not nauseated already, I shall refer him to the quotations (Augustine, &c.); where he will find such monstrous assertions, as are more than enough to offend the ears of Christians."

N E S T O R I A N S.

These were the followers of Nestorius, bishop and patriarch of Constantinople, who, about the year 429, taught that there were two persons in Jesus Christ, the divine and human, which are united, not hypostatically or substantially, but in a mystical manner: whence he concluded, that Mary was the mother of Christ, and not the mother of God. For this opinion, Nestorius was condemned and deposed by the council of Ephesus; and the decree of this council was confirmed by the emperor Theodosius, who banished the bishop to a monastery.

N I C O L A I T A N S.

The heresy of the Nicolaitans took its rise from Nicolas the deacon (mentioned Acts vi.), who, as Clemens Alexandrinus relates, had a beautiful wife; and, being reproved by the apostles for jealousy, ordered her to be brought forth, and gave permission for any one to marry her. This act, Clemens thus colours over, that he did not do it for levity's sake; but only to shew the contempt of pleasure, and to remove from him the sin of jealousy. Whatsoever Nicolas was, it is certain the Nicolaitans were heretical whoremongers and adulterers, and acted the most impure and unnatural lusts. Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ had in abomination their doctrine and deeds. "The Nicolaitans (says Osiander) were not much unlike the Anabaptists of Munster in his time, who exercised promiscuous lusts." But as far as can be collected from ecclesiastical writers, these were the false doctrines of the Nicolaitans. Although they made a confession of one God, nevertheless they imagined many virtues, that is, inferior gods, which they flagitiously worshipped. These they called Barbelo (whom they feigned to be a woman), Prunicus, Jaldoboth, and Canlocoth. They taught, that these gods were delighted with lusts, and ought so to be worshipped. Epiphanius gives this relation of Nicolas, that at first he proposed to himself wholly to abstain from his beautiful wife: but afterwards being conquered by his lust, taught, that he ought not to be curious in his carnal enjoyments; and that whosoever did not exercise venery every day, could not be a partaker of eternal life. It is also said of these heretics, that they accounted it an indifferent thing to eat of sacrifices offered to idols. It is therefore no wonder that persecutions arose against the Christians, seeing the heathens falsely believed that all Christians were as impure as these heretics; for the enemies of Christians put no manner of difference betwixt the true church of Christ, and these impious sects.

PELAGIANS.

Pelagius, the author of this heretical sect, was born in Wales; and his name was Morgan, which in the Welsh language signifies *sea-born*, from whence he had his Latin name Pelagius. He was charged with maintaining the following doctrines: 1. That Adam was by nature mortal, and, whether he had sinned or not, would certainly have died. 2. That the consequences of Adam's sin were confined to his own person. 3. That new-born infants are in the same condition with Adam before the fall. 4. That the law qualified men for the kingdom of heaven, and was founded upon equal promises with the gospel. 5. That the general resurrection of the dead does not follow in virtue of our Saviour's resurrection. 6. That the grace of God is given according to our merit. 7. That this grace is not granted for the performance of every moral act; the liberty of the will, and information in points of duty, being sufficient, &c. The sentiments of Pelagius were condemned by several councils in Africa, and by a synod at Antioch.

They who are called SEMI-PELAGIANS are such as retain some tincture of Pelagianism, whose leading principles are the five following: 1. That God did not dispense his grace to one more than another in consequence of predestination, i. e. an eternal and absolute decree; but was willing to save all men, if they complied with the terms of his gospel. 2. That Christ died for all men. 3. That the grace purchased by Christ, and necessary to salvation, was offered to all men. 4. That man, before he received grace, was capable of faith and holy desires. 5. That man was born free, and was consequently capable of resisting the influences of grace, or of complying with its suggestions.

SABELLIANS.

These were a sect of heretics, in the third century, that embraced the opinions of Sabellius, a philosopher of Egypt, who openly taught that there is but one person in the Godhead. The Sabellians maintained, that the Word and the Holy Spirit are only virtues; and held, that he who is in heaven is the Father of all things, descended into the virgin, became a child, and was born of her as a Son; and that having accomplished the mystery of our salvation, he diffused himself on the apostles in tongues of fire, and was then denominated the Holy Ghost. The Word, they taught, was darted, like a divine ray, to accomplish the work of redemption; and that, being re-ascended to heaven, the influences of the Father were communicated after a like manner to the apostles. Mr. Sharpe closes his account of the Sabellians with the following pertinent observations: "The blessed St. Augustine, in his writings, confuted these heretics. But as tares often spring up a fresh, so heresy, which seems extirpated, sometimes is renewed. Wherefore pastors of churches should be always on the watch. A good saying, and true, of this author, and highly necessary at this time to be put in practice; when the devil, by his agents, is so busy to spread their Arian, Socinian and Deistical notions, that destroy and eradicate the divinity of Christ; not only so, but also endeavour the destruction of all revealed religion; it is time to exert their pastoral power, and to thunder out their excommunications, lest otherwise God should remove our golden candlesticks, and transmit the light of the Gospel to other parts of the world that deserve it better than we. The Asian and African churches are lasting monuments of God's anger to a disobedient generation; and their dismal fate ought to be our monitors: for we are not better than they, I wish to God we were as good."

SOCINIANS.

They were so called from their founder Faustus Socinus, a native of Italy. This heresiarch openly declared against the doctrine of the Trinity; and taught, 1. That man, before his fall, was naturally mortal. 2. That no man by the light of nature can have any knowledge of God. 3. That man, before his fall, had no original righteousness. 4. That there is no original sin in us, as it imports concupiscence, or deformity of nature. 5. That there is a free will to goodness in us, and that we may here fulfil the law. 6. That God has no foreknowledge of contingencies determinately, but alternatively. 7. That the causes of predestination are not in God, but in us; that he doth not predestinate to salvation any particular or certain person; and that predestination may be frustrated. 8. That God could justly pardon our sins without any satisfaction. 9. That Christ, by his death, did not satisfy for us, but only obtained power for us to satisfy for ourselves, by our faith and obedience. 10. That Christ died for himself; i. e. not for his sins (for he was without sin), but for the mortality and infirmities of our nature, which he assumed. 11. That Christ became not our high-priest, nor immortal, nor impassable, before he ascended into heaven. 12. That death eternal is nothing else but a perpetual continuance in death or annihilation. 13. That everlasting fire is so called from its effect, which is the eternal extinction or annihilation of the wicked which shall be found alive in the last day. 14. That Christ's incarnation is against reason, and cannot be proved out of scripture. 15. That Christ is not truly God. 16. That the Holy Ghost is not God; that there is not a Trinity of persons in one God. 17. That the Old Testament is needless for a christian man.—Dr. Young shrewdly observes concerning Socinus, that he "was one of a narrow throat; and, out of a generous compassion to the scriptures (which the world, it seems, had misunderstood for 1500 years), was for weeding them of their mysteries; and rendering them, in the plenitude of his infallible reason, undisgusting and palatable to the rational part of mankind: he was for making religion familiar and inoffensive—and so he did; and unchristian too."

We shall close these melancholy descriptions in the awful words of Mr. Sharpe: "I dare aver (says he),
that

that in no country in Europe, no, not in Holland or Geneva, such vile enthusiasts go unpunished, except in Great-Britain alone. What account must be given by our superiors, at the last general audit, for such contempt of God and his eternal Son! Good God! What national punishments and judgments can we expect from thy vengeance, for such monstrous, flagrant, and flagitious sins! Blasphemies so horrid and transcendent, as are enough to destroy our land by fire from heaven, as God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah! For our sins of heresy; such as Arianism, Socinianism, &c. for our sins of infidelity; such as Deism, Scepticism, and an utter rejection of God's revealed will: for our national sins; such as rebellion: all which do highly deserve God's judgments and visitation. I may here apply the words of the Almighty to the prophet Jeremiah (ch. v. 9.): "*Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?*" To avert which, nothing is so proper for us of this nation, as to call our sins to remembrance; and by a sincere and hearty repentance, turn to God, and "*render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.*"

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